

has a direct impact on the medical profession. Whether he properly filed disclosures in buying that stock or whether he did something improper is still to be resolved.

Part of the reason the nominees for President Trump are taking longer than others is that many, like Congressman PRICE, have extensive financial holdings. We found that when a billionaire from Chicago—Penny Pritzker—was nominated for Secretary of Commerce under President Obama, it took literally 6 months for us to gather all the financial information about her and to divest her of any potential conflicts of interest. It turns out that many of these nominees did not have their ethics filings on file in time to be considered in a timely fashion, and, in some cases, information about them was found to be in conflict with reality, and now there is a further investigation necessary. It isn't just a matter of spite; it is a matter of doing our due diligence, as required by the Constitution and required in the U.S. Senate.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

A word about ObamaCare: My friend from Wyoming, a medical doctor himself, has felt strongly against the Affordable Care Act since its passage. I view it a lot differently.

There are currently 1.2 million Illinoisans—1 out of 10 in our State—who have health insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. Over half of them are now brought into the Medicaid system, the others are on insurance exchanges, and many of them have their premiums subsidized by our Federal Government.

In addition, every person in America who has a health insurance plan has benefited by the Affordable Care Act. Why? Because we took some of the worst abuses in health insurance and said: You can no longer do that and sell health insurance in this country. One example is lifetime caps—caps on the amount of money that a policy will play. Now, \$100,000 in coverage may sound like a lot, until you are diagnosed with cancer—and then it disappears in a matter of days and weeks. So we eliminated lifetime caps on coverage.

The second most important thing we did was to say: You can't discriminate against someone because they have a preexisting condition. Is there anyone alive that doesn't have some preexisting condition? If it was bad enough in the bad old days before the Affordable Care Act, that was enough to either disqualify them from health insurance or to run the premiums up to the high heavens. Now you can no longer be discriminated against because your husband has diabetes, your wife survived breast cancer, or your child has survived a cancer scare themselves. We have eliminated that in all health insurance policies.

The third thing we did was to say that every health insurance policy sold in the United States has to cover men-

tal illness and substance abuse treatment. The people who pushed for that—Democratic Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and Republican Pete Domenici of New Mexico—both had family histories of mental illness, and they said health insurance ought to cover mental illness. They finally prevailed. It was included in the Affordable Care Act, so it means that, across the board, all of us who buy health insurance are buying care for mental illness.

Is substance abuse treatment important? Think about the opioid and heroin epidemic across the United States—across my State of Illinois. Where would these families be, with a person in the family suffering from addiction, if the health insurance plan didn't provide some coverage? The Affordable Care Act requires that.

When the Republicans say that they want to repeal it, the obvious question is: And then what? What happens next, when the insurance companies can stop covering these critical areas?

There is another thing. My wife and I have raised some kids who have gone through college, and when they finished college they didn't quite go into their long, permanent career. They had a bunch of jobs, looking for the right place.

I can recall calling my daughter, fresh out of the University of Wisconsin, and saying: Jen, do you have health insurance? I know you did as a student.

She said: Dad, I'm fine. I'm strong and healthy. I don't need it.

That is the last thing a father wants to hear.

Do you know what the Affordable Care Act says? My daughter—anyone's daughter—up to the age of 26 can stay on my family plan. How about that for common sense? There are 90,000 young people in Illinois protected by the family plans because of that provision. Now we hear from the Senator from Wyoming that this is a big failure and we have to repeal it.

The last thing we did is important to every senior citizen on Medicare across the United States. There used to be something called the doughnut hole. It is even hard to describe, but it related to paying seniors for their prescription drugs. Here is what it said; try to follow this: We will cover you for the first few months of the year, with Medicare paying the prescription drug cost. Then you are on your own for 3 or 4 months. Once you have delved into your own personal savings up to a certain amount, we will come back and cover you again.

Go figure. It would take a Congressman or a Senator to dream up something like that, and seniors across the country felt completely vulnerable. When they went into that period of no coverage, many of them stopped taking their drugs. That is not a good thing. So we closed that gap. We closed that doughnut hole.

What does it mean to seniors in Illinois? On average, they save \$1,000 a

year because the Affordable Care Act brought this reform to Medicare. Now the Republicans say: Let's repeal that. Do they want to explain to the seniors in my State that they now have to turn for their savings for that gap period again? We don't want to see that happen.

For 6 years, Republicans have said repeatedly that they want to repeal ObamaCare. Repeal ObamaCare. They say it in their sleep. They have vote after vote—I think 60 different votes in the House—to repeal it, knowing it would never happen with President Obama in the White House. Now, the dog done caught the bus. Here they are, in the majority in the House and the Senate with a Republican President, and their first order of business: Repeal ObamaCare.

Do you know what they are learning? All across the United States, medical health care providers—hospitals, doctors, clinics, and others—are telling them that will be a disaster. If you eliminate the Affordable Care Act without a replacement as good or better, you are going to leave chaos in the system and a lot of people without the protection of health insurance.

So after 6 years, you would think the Republicans would have a replacement plan. Right? A substitute. They have had all this time to think about it. No, not yet; they are still thinking about it, but they are determined to repeal.

I met with hospital administrators around my State last weekend and will continue to in the future. They are worried. We estimate Illinois hospitals will lose over 90,000 jobs with the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. We know that downstate hospitals and hospitals in rural areas—in many States represented here—are going to be forced to close. What happens when you close that smalltown hospital in downstate Illinois? What used to be a 20-minute ride to the hospital becomes a 1-hour drive. How important is that? Well, when you are in labor, it is important or if you just had a farm accident or you are responding to something that happened on the highway, it is critical, life-or-death important. So you would think Republicans would have a plan to keep these hospitals open. They don't. We haven't seen a substitute.

They rail against ObamaCare; they rail against the Affordable Care Act. They don't criticize the individual components I have described because they are wildly popular with the American people.

The irony of this is that we have spent 6 years trying to convince people that the Affordable Care Act, even with its flaws and faults—and it has them, but even with that, it is good for America. We got nowhere. We were beating our heads against the wall.

Then, when the Republicans took over and started talking about repeal, people were stepping back and saying: What am I going to lose if they repeal it? The approval rating for the Affordable Care Act since Donald Trump was

elected is going up, as people come now to finally understand the value of it for their families and their businesses.

So I say to my friends on the Republican side, as I have said over and over again: The Affordable Care Act is not a perfect law. The only perfect law was carried down the side of a mountain by Senator Moses on clay tablets. Everything else can be improved, and I am ready to sign up for that improvement. First, jettison this whole talk of repeal. It is totally irresponsible. If we want to have a constructive conversation about how to make the Affordable Care Act more affordable, covering more people, finally doing something about prescription drug costs, let's sit down and do it together on a bipartisan basis. Starting with repeal is a non-starter.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I want to express my support for Rex Tillerson to be our next Secretary of State. Mr. Tillerson is one of the most distinguished businessmen in the world. His reputation precedes him. I don't have to recount for all of you his remarkable career—rising from an entry-level production engineer to CEO of ExxonMobil, the largest oil company in the world. Mr. Tillerson's story should be an inspiration to kids across this country: Through hard work, discipline, and striving, you can achieve your dreams, even if you weren't born into wealth, power, or privilege. Like the Boy Scouts he has mentored, like the Eagle Scout he was, Mr. Tillerson inspires by his example.

No one can doubt Mr. Tillerson has acquired a wide range of skills throughout his notable life, as well as a gold-plated reputation. I think it goes without saying that a man of such varied experiences will bring a well-informed and shrewd perspective to the post. In fact, I would suggest that it is the very perspective which recommends him most for the job.

I met with him in December, and we had a wide-ranging conversation about Russia, the Middle East, human rights, and the many other geopolitical challenges and opportunities facing our country. I was impressed by the breadth of his knowledge, his familiarity with so many world leaders, and his understanding of their peoples. The one thing that really stood out to me was his clear-eyed, hard-nosed prudence. It is little wonder that Mr. Tillerson comes highly recommended by Dick Cheney and Bob Gates, seasoned statesmen with no illusions about the world and no doubts about America's role in it. I am confident that as Secretary of State, he will protect the interests of the American people just as he protected the interests of ExxonMobil's shareholders as their CEO.

I have heard some Senators wonder whether a businessman can really walk away from a company and its financial

interests—as if it were the money that made the man, instead of the man who made the money. Their concern reminds me of similar questions raised about one of the best Secretaries of State in the modern era, George Shultz. When President Reagan nominated him, Secretary Shultz was president and director of the Bechtel Group, a large construction concern with business across the Arab world. People asked whether Secretary Shultz would therefore tilt U.S. policy toward those countries. I think anyone looking back today on his record would marvel at those fears.

In 2015, the World Jewish Congress awarded Secretary Shultz its prestigious Theodor Herzl Award on behalf of his work with America's good friend Israel. Yes, Secretary Shultz went on to lead a very successful tenure, working with different countries all over the world and always putting America's interests front and center.

If anything, Rex Tillerson's business experience will only enhance his ability to provide the President his sound, unbiased judgment. If you need any more evidence, just look at the way Mr. Tillerson has conducted himself throughout the confirmation process. He has answered every question and addressed every concern. He has been calm and steady under pressure. These are precisely the qualities we need in our next Secretary of State.

Today, I offer my strong support for an outstanding businessman and an American patriot, our next Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson. I encourage all of my colleagues to vote for the nomination.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MR. DURBIN. 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. CARDIN. 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. CARDIN. Mr. President, as I indicated earlier, this afternoon I had an opportunity to meet with King Abdallah of Jordan. During that conversation with Members of the Senate, there was a good deal of discussion about foreign policy challenges that are very much a part of this debate on Mr. Tillerson.

It was interesting to listen to King Abdallah of Jordan talk about his country's commitment to refugees. They have taken in refugees from many parts of that region—from Iraq, Yemen, and other countries. They have taken in over 600,000 refugees from Syria. I think King Abdallah used a number. If you wanted to use a comparable number of refugees coming into America, it would be equivalent to about 60 million refugees coming into our country. Let me remind you that in Syria, President Obama committed

to 10,000. It is literally a drop in the bucket compared to what Jordan has done in accepting refugees. It just underscores even more how wrong President Trump's Executive order over the weekend was, which put a hold on our refugee program and restricted travel to the United States.

The vetting that goes forward in Jordan in regard to refugees is under the auspices of the United Nations, and of those who are seeking refugee status, a very small percentage—I understand it is less than one percent—will actually ever get a chance to be considered for refugee status here in the United States. Let me remind you that we are talking about, generally, women and children who are fleeing persecution, who have established themselves as refugees. They go through several screening procedures. Their background is thoroughly checked. They check all of the different indices as far as different agencies are concerned to make sure that they have no concern. Then a small percentage of that number actually ever gets to the United States. It takes 18 to 24 months. To date, there hasn't been a single episode of terrorism from a Syrian refugee. We have a pretty strong vetting process—the strongest in the world—that very much puts American security first.

It was disheartening for me to listen to King Abdallah talk about the sacrifices his country has made. Of the 650,000 refugees that Jordan has taken in from Syria, the King indicated that about 90 percent are integrated into the Jordanian society. They are not in camps. They are in their schools, in their communities. They have been able to make sure that the refugees are well cared for. It is a huge part of the budget. I think the King indicated that maybe 20 percent of the Jordanian budget deals with refugees. That is a country that understands their regional responsibilities and international responsibilities.

The United States has been the leader in the global community, recognizing that the flight of people—the refugees—represents not only a humanitarian requirement for the global community but also security issues. We have to have an orderly process for those who are fleeing persecution, and the United States has always been in the leadership in opening our borders. We are proud of the refugees that came to this country after World War II, from Cambodia, Vietnam, and Cuba. There is a long list of those who have escaped persecution coming here to the United States and helping to build this great country. We recognize that diversity is our strength. This made us the great Nation that we are.

For all those reasons, it was very disheartening to hear President Trump's Executive order, where he really questions whether America is committed to its traditional values, whether we are going to maintain our international leadership, whether we are going to be

credible when we deal with other countries around the world to take on the responsibilities of dealing with the flight of people who are escaping persecution.

I mentioned all this because the Secretary of State is the key diplomat that we have for America and to use America's power of persuasion, of using diplomacy, of using the tools at our disposal under the Department of State, including development assistance for how we can, in fact, promote those values. We need someone who is going to be able to speak out about these policies that were announced over the weekend because they weaken America. They make us less safe. I brought this out: In reality what you are talking about is how do you engage other countries around the world to help us in our war against terror when we tell them that Muslims aren't really welcome here in America and it is a majority-Muslim country? How does that work? How do we protect Americans who are traveling abroad who may be subjected to physical danger because of the statements that have been made by our President? How do you protect this country from the concerns about homegrown terrorism, which might, in fact, be encouraged by the recruitment of terrorists as a result of what the President has done in his Executive order?

For all those reasons, it is even more important for us to have as the next Secretary of State a person who is committed to the core values of this country—that it is part of their gut, and that they will be a strong advocate for those issues. I have already indicated during the questioning in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that we did not see that moral clarity in regard to Mr. Tillerson and in regard to those values.

The second issue that came up in King Abdallah's meeting was very interesting. We had a long discussion about Russia and about Russia's influence. We know about Russia's influence in Ukraine. We had a little discussion about Russia's desires in regard to the Baltics and whether the Baltics could be the next Ukraine, as far as Russia's aggression. We know that Russia is already in Georgia. Russia is already in Moldova. Russia is in Ukraine. Do they have their sights now set for Lithuania or Latvia or Estonia or Poland, where there is a large Russian-speaking population?

Interesting observations were made that if Russia sees that we don't have resolve, they will use that opportunity to expand their influence. We saw that in the Middle East. We saw how in the Middle East Russia, which a few years ago had very little influence in the Middle East, now has a growing influence in the Middle East—not only in Syria but in other countries in that region where you see Russia's active engagement. So this is not theoretical.

Russia's interests are different than our interests. Make no mistake about

that. They don't share our values. They are not our friends. They are trying to compromise our democratic institutions. We have seen that over and over—not only the attack on our election system here in the United States, not only the attack on the system in Montenegro in parliamentary elections, but the concern now in Western Europe, as they are entering into the election season. We see over and over what Russia has done in denying space for civil society, in compromising dissent in their own country, in the way that corruption has been established as part of government. All of that is just against the principles that we believe in, that we believe the global community has accepted, and that leads to the stability in nations and advances America's national security interests.

I must tell you that there are Democrats and Republicans all talking about the fact that we have to stand up to Russia. We have to be stronger on Russia. Yes, we have been able—thanks to the leadership of the Obama Administration—to take the sanctions that were passed by Congress. We passed the sanctions. The leadership and Members of the Senate and the House have brought about the stronger sanctions regime here in the United States. I congratulate my colleague, Senator MENENDEZ, who was one of the principal leaders to get stronger sanctions here in regard to Russia, and other members of our committee who worked on that. We were able to get stronger sanctions. At the same time, we were able to get Europe to join us in these sanctions, and that helped us. But now there is a concern as to whether these sanctions will remain.

President Trump at least has raised that question as to the continuation of sanctions. The question becomes this: Should we be maintaining those sanctions until Russia complies with the Minsk agreement that are relevant to its invasion into Ukraine? But we should also be strengthening those sanctions because of Russia's illegal activities in attacking our country and in what they are doing in Syria in perpetrating war crimes. We should be looking at stronger sanctions against Russia.

I mention all of that because the person who can lead us in that effort is our next Secretary of State. We look at Mr. Tillerson and his record as the CEO of ExxonMobil, their relationships in Russia, and his answers to questions as to whether we should consider additional sanctions. Over and over he says: Well, there are multiple considerations. To me, that was a red flag that indicated that maybe there is some business interest here. Maybe, if there is a business interest, we shouldn't let that be more important than the human rights advancements and the other areas that we are concerned about.

In reality, we saw that in the way ExxonMobil lobbied against the original sanctions that were imposed

against Russia. They lobbied against it because they said it didn't create a level playing field for U.S. companies. The reason it didn't create a level playing field is that the United States is always the leader on sanctions. We always set the international bar as to what we need to do, and then the rest of the world follows us. But if we take the lowest bar, we will never have a tough enough stance against Russia.

We need, as the next Secretary of State, a person who is going to be a leader in saying: We are going to use every one of our diplomatic tools to isolate Russia if they continue this activity of interfering with our elections, threatening to interfere with European elections, interfering with humanitarian assistance in Syria, or if they continue their illegal occupation of Crimea. We need that type of leadership. That is one of the reasons we have been so much engaged in this debate.

There are many other issues about which we talked with King Abdallah that dealt with foreign policy challenges, including moving forward with broader coalitions against ISIS in the region. All of that requires the use of all the power we have. We know that our military is very strong. We are very proud of our Department of Defense and very proud of the men and women who serve in the military. They are the guardians of our freedom. We thank them every day for the sacrifices they make on behalf of our Nation. We owe it to them to make sure our military is only used as a matter of last resort, that we use all of our diplomatic skills in order to prevent the unnecessary use of our military, that we only use the military when it is absolutely essential and it is a matter of last resort.

We must have as our chief diplomat a person who will carry out that strong commitment to our diplomatic skills and agenda in order to make sure that we only use the military when necessary.

We have heard this before. But it was General Mattis who said: If you don't fund the Department of State, if you don't give them the resources they need for development assistance, you are going to have to give me a lot more soldiers.

Our diplomats can very much keep us safe, and they can do it with less risk to our men and women who serve in the military and at less cost.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. Kaine. Madam President, I rise to speak concerning the nomination by President Trump of Rex Tillerson to be Secretary of State. I believe I am going

to be speaking a little bit this afternoon and possibly later. This will just be part of my remarks this afternoon.

First, I am going to say some positive things about Mr. Tillerson's career and the importance of the position, but then I want to talk about the reason for my opposition, which has to do largely with my concern about whether he is capable of exercising truly independent judgment on behalf of the United States, particularly given his 41-year career with ExxonMobil.

To begin, Mr. Tillerson has an exemplary record with ExxonMobil. I was impressed by it. I have been impressed by his business acumen. I think this one would, frankly, be relatively straightforward if he had been nominated for Secretary of Commerce. I think it would be relatively straightforward had he been nominated for Secretary of Energy.

That is an interesting aspect of some of these nominations. I think there are some people who are up who—if they were in other positions, they might be easier, but because of the ones they have been nominated for, it has made it a little more difficult. I put Mr. Tillerson in that category.

Secretary of State is an enormously important position. We all know that it is important, but we, even for the public, separate the Secretary of State position from others.

There are four Cabinet Secretaries who by law are not allowed to be involved in political campaigns. They can't go out on the campaign trail during election season. They are designated as "special," and I think they are special for a reason—Secretary of Defense, Secretary of State, Secretary of Treasury, and the Attorney General. The reason these four positions are made separate, in my view, is they are positions that are supposed to have a special gravity, positions that are supposed to be above politics. They are also positions that are supposed to have a degree of independence.

An Attorney General needs to have a degree of independence from a President because that individual must weigh in on the legality of actions even of the administration in making decisions. I think the Secretary of State needs some independence and gravitas as well. That is why the Secretary of State position is such a special one.

I want to focus on this area of independence and the independence I wanted to see in a Secretary of State Tillerson and that I did not feel comfortable enough after the research I have done and after the hearing itself. It fits into three basic categories—issues with respect to climate, issues with respect to Russia, and issues with respect to the development policy that the United States uses in nations around the world, including very poor nations that are resource rich but often find that their oil reserves or other natural resources put them into kind of a resource-cursed position where, resources notwithstanding, they

actually trend toward authoritarianism and keeping their citizens in poverty.

Let me start with climate. Climate is an enormously important issue in Virginia, as it is to all States, but to give you kind of the Virginia focus on climate issues, Virginia voters overwhelmingly believe that humans are affecting climate and that something should be done about it. We have 134 counties. The eastern part of Virginia—Hampton Roads, near the Atlantic—is the second most threatened area in the United States to sea level rise. So if you go to Hampton Roads, VA—1.6 million people, the center of naval power in the United States and the world—what you find is sea level rise accelerating to the extent that neighborhoods where you could once sell a house, you can't sell it anymore. Flooding that was once every few years is now regular.

Even our Nation's military operations in Hampton Roads are jeopardized. There is a main road leading into the Norfolk Naval Base, which is the largest naval base in the United States—the largest naval base in the world. That road is increasingly flooded just during normal tidal conditions. We are not talking about storms; we are talking about normal tidal conditions. The inability to get road access into America's center of naval power is highly challenging, highly problematic. In the future, it is going to be very expensive for us.

So the climate change issues in Hampton Roads—whether it is affecting your ability to sell a house, the ability to conduct naval operations—and in many other areas is of deep concern to my State.

There are climate issues in other parts of my State, from weather patterns to warming temperatures wiping out species in the Shenandoah National Park because as the temperature warms, the species need to move higher and higher, and at some point they can't move any higher. So there are endangered species in the Shenandoah National Park because of climate issues.

The issue is not only important to my State, it is a critically important part of the job. The Secretary of State in the previous administration was involved in crafting the Paris climate accord. Nearly 200 nations agreed that climate change is a huge problem and that we have to do something about it, and each nation came forward voluntarily to craft its own plan so that the world could deal with this problem.

The U.S. played a critical role—Secretary Kerry and others—in forging this global coalition around the overwhelming scientific consensus. The Secretary of State in this administration, along with others—the EPA Administrator—will play a key role in determining whether we continue to take seriously climate, whether we continue to take seriously the promises we made under the climate accord, or whether

we go backward. I don't want to go backward because it would hurt my State and hurt our country and hurt the world.

During my examination of Mr. Tillerson during his confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I was not happy with the answers with respect to climate issues. The overwhelming majority of scientists say that climate change is real and that it is caused significantly by the burning of fossil fuels and the release of CO₂. This is not a controversial conclusion; it should not be partisan, either.

The first climate bill that was introduced in this body was introduced by Senator McCAIN in 2004. Then, in 2007, a predecessor of mine, Senator Warner of Virginia, a Republican, and Senator Lieberman of Connecticut, a Democrat, introduced a bipartisan bill. Senator Warner, now retired—John Warner—still speaks regularly on the national security implications of climate change.

During the hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I examined Rex Tillerson about the role of ExxonMobil in climate research. ExxonMobil is a company that is chock-full of engineers and scientists. It is one of the most accomplished companies in the world if you just measure it by the extent of engineering and science talent that it has.

There has been a series of investigative articles in the last few years in the Los Angeles Times, the New York Review of Books, and Inside Climate News that get into the question of what ExxonMobil knew about climate science and what they told the public. I wanted to ask Mr. Tillerson about this. Some of the information that I put on the table during that examination: There was an internal letter in September of 1982 from Exxon's Theoretical and Mathematical Science Laboratory. This was during the time Mr. Tillerson was working for the company.

I want to read a quote from this letter which I put into the RECORD as I was examining Mr. Tillerson:

However, over the past several years a clear scientific consensus has emerged regarding the expected climate effects of increased atmospheric CO₂. . . . There is unanimous agreement in the scientific community that a temperature increase of this magnitude would bring about significant changes in the earth's climate. The time required for doubling of atmospheric CO₂—

Doubling of atmospheric CO₂—depends upon the future world consumption of fossil fuels. There is potential for our research to attract the attention of the popular news media because of the connection between Exxon's major business and the role of fossil fuel combustion in contributing to the increase of atmospheric CO₂. . . . [O]ur ethical responsibility is to permit the publication of our research in the scientific literature; indeed, to do otherwise would be a breach of Exxon's public position and ethical credo on honesty and integrity.

In other words, by 1982 the key scientific research organizations within

ExxonMobil, which has a sterling cadre of scientists and researchers, said: Here is our view of the scientific research—and not just other scientific research, they did their own studies to replicate it. They concluded that the burning of fossil fuels was going to lead potentially to a significant increase in global temperature, with catastrophic climate effects.

There is other information as well that ExxonMobil had within it during Mr. Tillerson's tenure with the company. But by 2000, ExxonMobil in its face to the public was saying something very different. Despite the internal recognition of climate science and the potential effects on the economy and on our atmosphere and despite scientists with ExxonMobil saying we have an ethical duty to share these facts with the scientific community, by 2000, ExxonMobil was publishing, in major publications in this country, op-eds—full-page op-eds in newspapers and magazines. I am going to read a quote from one, an ExxonMobil published op-ed in 2001:

Knowing that weather forecasts are reliable for a few days at best, we should recognize the enormous challenge facing scientists seeking to predict climate change and its impact over the next century.

Geological evidence indicates climate greenhouse gas levels experience significant natural variability for reasons having nothing to do with human activity. . . . Against this backdrop of large, poorly understood natural invariability, it is impossible for scientists to attribute the recent small surface temperature increase to human causes.

So, from 1982, there were scientists at ExxonMobil who were aware of it and were saying we have a duty to share this with the public and with our fellow scientists, but by 2000, in statements to the American public—all during Rex Tillerson's tenure at ExxonMobil—the company was taking a very different position.

I summarized this material during my examination of Mr. Tillerson before the Foreign Relations Committee, and I asked him: What do you have to say about this evidence and about the numerous public reports that ExxonMobil knew about climate science but made a decision to tell the American public something different? A pretty straightforward question from a Senator whose State is experiencing climate change, a pretty important question for a nominee who will be in charge of, as Secretary of State, carrying out our obligations under agreements, such as the Paris climate agreement.

Mr. Tillerson's answer to me was a little surprising. He said: Oh, I can't answer this. You are going to have to ask somebody at ExxonMobil.

He had stepped away from ExxonMobil a few days before the hearing. I was puzzled by it. So I went back to him and I said: Well, wait a minute. I want to make sure I got this right. You were at ExxonMobil for 41 years.

That is right.

You were an executive at ExxonMobil for more than half of your tenure there; isn't that right?

That is right.

You were the CEO of ExxonMobil beginning, I believe, in 2006; am I right about that?

You are right about that.

I am not asking the company's position. You now are no longer at ExxonMobil. I am asking you, as somebody who is going to be in charge of carrying forward America's obligations under the Paris climate accord, whether the allegation that ExxonMobil knew about climate science but chose to say something different to the American public—I am going to ask you if you can answer that question.

And he came back again and said: You are going to have to ask somebody at ExxonMobil.

I then asked Mr. Tillerson a really important question. I said this: Do you lack the knowledge to answer my questions or are you refusing to answer my questions?

And he said: A little bit of both. A little bit of both.

And I said to him: You have been there 41 years. I have a hard time believing you don't know the answer to this question. I think you are refusing to answer my question, and he didn't comment on that.

I then followed up with one more question to Mr. Tillerson that I also think was important because I am a lawyer, and I just wanted to make sure I understood this. I asked him: Are you sitting here today subject to any kind of a confidentiality agreement that would prohibit you from answering the question I just posed to you? And he said no, that he was not.

I asked Mr. Tillerson these questions because I am deeply interested in climate change. It affects my State in a significant way, and it is directly relevant to his job, but I asked him for another reason as well. I am just going to talk for a minute about the reason, and I am going to yield to my colleague from Oregon and return later this evening on the other points.

The reason I was asking Mr. Tillerson about this was not just his awareness of science, I was asking him to see whether at this point, as a nominee for Secretary of State of the United States, he could set aside a 41-year loyalty to his previous employer, ExxonMobil, and instead focus solely on his obligations to this country if he were to be confirmed as Secretary of State.

I believe he knew the answer to the question I asked him, and he told me he was not under any legal agreement that would bar him from answering my question, but he, nevertheless, refused to answer my question. When I challenged him on it and said: You are refusing to answer my question, he basically agreed that was the case.

I think we are entitled to a Secretary of State who can set aside any other loyalty, including an understandable loyalty to an employer of 41 years, and exercise complete and independent judgment on behalf of the interests of

this country. The refusal of Mr. Tillerson to answer my questions about a matter clearly within his knowledge, clearly within the job description of Secretary of State and deeply important to my Commonwealth, led me to have significant doubts about whether he could separate his previous employment from his independent obligation to this job, should he be confirmed.

I am going to have more to say on a couple of other issues related to this independence point when I return later this evening.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KENNEDY). The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I appreciate my colleague's contributions and his insights, representing Virginia and representing the United States.

I must say that all of us were quite frustrated by the hearing we held with Rex Tillerson. We know that America needs a strong and capable Secretary of State. We have many great power issues to wrestle with—certainly with Russia, certainly with China. We know we have many emerging powers around the globe that will raise issues relevant to the security of the United States and the economy of the United States. We know the Secretary of State plays a key role in shaping our policy toward impoverished nations and how we might facilitate their growth and enhance our Nation's relationship with them. Nuclear strategy is always an extremely important role.

This position is perhaps the most important position in the administration, second to the Presidency, and it is for that reason that we are weighing with such intense attention.

Already we have challenges that have been raised by the conduct of our President over the last 12 days. We have, in 12 days, seen actions by President Trump that have diminished our Nation's standing in the world, that have offended many of our international neighbors and allies, that have weakened the security of our country. So we need a capable Secretary of State. We need that person soon.

Certainly one piece of the pattern we have seen is a new low in the relationship with the leadership of Mexico on our southern border, but we also have seen actions that have offended over a billion people in the world through the Friday night Executive order banning immigration from seven Muslim-majority nations along with an order affecting refugees fleeing the ravages and devastation of war in many places, but Syria is specifically singled out for a longer period of time.

The President said, well, this is not, in fact, a Muslim ban and that it is about the security of the United States of America, but he is certainly wrong on both counts. All the nations singled out are Muslim-majority countries. Not a single immigrant from any of those countries has killed an American in a terrorist attack, and the President

made a very specific point, saying there would be exceptions for Christians, meaning there would not be exceptions for Muslims.

One of his advisers, Rudy Giuliani, even said explicitly that the President had wanted to do a Muslim ban and asked him how to do it legally. So the intent is crystal clear that this is a ban founded in religious discrimination, and a policy based on religious discrimination has no place in our Nation. It is completely incompatible with our traditions and our principles of religious liberty.

We are a nation built by immigrants, founded by men and women seeking safety from religious persecution, adding to the sense that this position is wrong and abhorrent. It goes against the fundamental building blocks of our Nation and everything we stand for.

If our history and our fundamental values aren't enough, then we need to consider the danger this ban represents for our national security. Much of our efforts in the Middle East involve close partnership, close teamwork with the leaders of Muslim nations.

Taking on ISIS involves close coordination and close teamwork with the leadership of Muslim nations. In fact, we should be very aware that ISIS uses as its recruiting tool that the United States is conducting a war on Islam, and the President's actions feed directly in and serve the ISIS recruiting strategy.

The world has reacted with furor. Over the weekend, more than 4,000 Oregonians attended a pair of my townhall meetings. The first meeting was in a room about this size, and I was astounded to see 600 people just jammed in, just crowding it. It was the largest townhall I had ever had. I do 36 townhalls a year, open forum. People can come and ask anything they want.

Then I went to my second townhall, and it wasn't 600 folks. It was 3,700 people who turned out just because they heard that a Senator was holding a townhall, and they wanted to make their voices heard about how wrong they thought it was, the direction that President Trump is headed. A key piece of that was certainly his ban on Muslims entering our Nation.

Protests erupted at airports all across our country. I went out on Sunday to the Portland Airport. It had been informally organized, the protest at 2 o'clock, and I got out there about 2:15. People were pouring in. There may have been somewhere around 1,000 people by the time I could get out onto the upper level deck of the two levels of the airport—the level at which people are arriving for their flights—to be able to speak to people.

The condemnation and opposition didn't just come from the grassroots across America. It didn't just come from the spontaneous voices of American citizens who value religious liberty, value our traditions, value their understanding of our Constitution and wanting to send a message to President

Trump that he was violating each and every one of those things, that opposition came loud and clear from international leaders as well.

Our Canadian neighbors made sure the world knew they welcomed the immigrants and refugees that America had slammed the door on.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel called the President to remind him of our Nation's responsibilities, as signatories to the Geneva Convention, to take in refugees. It is quite embarrassing that a European leader has to call an American President to educate him about the Geneva Convention.

France's President Francois Hollande has called for a firm European response to this ban; the United Kingdom, whose Prime Minister Theresa May just met with President Trump last week, came out against the order; and more than a million Britons signed a petition to have the British Government rescind its invitation to President Trump to travel to London for a state visit.

Iraq, Iran, Brussels, Scotland, Norway, nation after nation have come out to protest this terrible, dangerous policy.

It is going to be up to our next Secretary of State to repair and rebuild these relationships and the reputation of the United States of America. So much damage has been done in just 12 days.

My colleagues Senator MCCAIN and Senator GRAHAM said in a statement this weekend: "This Executive order sends a signal, intended or not, that America does not want Muslims coming into our country," and indeed it does.

So is Rex Tillerson the right individual to set our Nation back on a firm and steady course? Is he the right person to guide us through this volatile international landscape, where we need to rebuild alliances and restore leadership?

In short, the answer is that Rex Tillerson is not the right man to do it.

Forty years in the oil and gas market, 40 years in an oil company are good preparations for leading an oil company but not good preparation for leading the United States of America in international relations, not good preparation for serving as our top diplomat, putting out fires, calming fears, communicating our policies to the world in this volatile moment in history.

During the hearing, there were a series of questions really related to one's moral compass in leading the foreign policy of the United States of America. One of the questions I asked about was Exxon's effort to set up a subsidiary to evade American sanctions on Iran and what did he feel about that as a leader of Exxon. He responded by saying: I don't have any memory of this. Really? The top management of Exxon decides to set up a subsidiary to circumvent American sanctions on Iran with a great deal of national security at stake, and he has no memory? Well,

that was certainly a disappointing comment and an unbelievable statement.

How about when we asked him about Exxon lobbying against U.S. sanctions on Russia because of its annexation of Crimea and the holding of territory in the eastern part of Ukraine? He said: Oh, Exxon didn't lobby on this. Yet the lobbying reports were right there. We have transparency on this. Millions of dollars were spent lobbying on this issue, and they certainly weren't lobbying for U.S. sanctions. This was a second extraordinary statement by the nominee.

I then asked the nominee about Exxon's pattern of working with dictators to take the royalties for oil and funnel them to the dictator's family rather than to the treasury. This is particularly true in Equatorial Guinea where President Obiang has declared himself President for life. His response was simply: But Senator, we weren't successfully prosecuted for violating the law. That is not a statement related to moral compass and understanding. Certainly, when a company takes a nation's treasure and diverts it into the pockets of a dictator, you are affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. Certainly, the people of Equatorial Guinea are a poor people who could use those resources for health care, for transportation systems. The President of Equatorial Guinea is famous for filling a plane with fancy sports cars from Europe and flying them to Equatorial Guinea. And how does he do that? Because Exxon steered the royalties for that nation's oil into the pockets of the dictator, but we didn't get any sense that there was any concern about the impact that it had on the people of that nation.

Members of the committee asked him about the extrajudicial killings by police officers in the Philippines—the extrajudicial killings ordered by President Duterte. Young men were shot down in the street. I think at last count an estimated 4,000 to 6,000 young men were assassinated in the street, and he simply said: I need to get more information. This is not something that has been hidden on the back pages of the newspaper; this is something fundamentally contrary to the principles of due process and justice that our Nation stands for. Couldn't the nominee have expressed that this is completely in violation of our core principles? But he had no ability to do so.

We come then to global warming, an impact that is occurring right now on the ground in my State. The burning of coal, oil, and natural gas, causing an accumulation of carbon dioxide and an accumulation of methane, is resulting in the acidification of the ocean. That is causing oysters to have difficulty reproducing because it affects the formation of their shells at the beginning of their life. The higher acidity makes it harder to form shells.

We see global warming in Oregon in terms of a longer fire season with more

intense fires. It is burning more forest there than ever before. We see it in terms of a lower average snowpack on the Cascades that is causing significant drought and smaller and warmer trout streams. This isn't some strange phenomenon that we imagine might happen in the future; it is happening at this moment. We have high tides that are now covering the sidewalks of cities on sunny days. We have moose dying of ticks because it is not cold enough to kill the ticks in the winter. We have lobsters off Maine traveling further into Canada while they start to get fish from the Carolinas. It is everywhere we look. It impacts the economy of our country, particularly our rural economy of fishing, forestry, and farming. His response was simply: We need to keep talking to people about it. He says it is an issue, not particularly urgent, not necessitating American leadership, but just something we should be at the table for—not at the table to urge others, just be at the table. That certainly misses the size of this challenge to our planet.

Here we are, 12 days into the Presidency with major international problems occurring, and we have a nominee who, on issue after issue after issue, lacked a moral compass or insight about the complexity of issues, about the principles of our Nation. So for these reasons, I am voting against the nominee.

I may well be back to extend my remarks at another moment, but I am delighted to yield to my colleague from New Mexico who is standing by to make his remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, thank you for the recognition, and I thank Senator MERKLEY very much for yielding.

I have been here on the floor, listening to Senators Kaine and MERKLEY, and I saw Senator CARDIN speaking earlier from my office. We can see that for many of us who sat through these hearings and heard the answers, it didn't give us a lot of confidence that Rex Tillerson was going to be able to step in and be the top diplomat for the United States of America. So I join in all the comments that have been made earlier.

I want to talk about one of the issues that has developed over the last couple of days and that really has bearing on this. For the last century, the United States has led the world stage. We are the inspiration for countless nations as they nurture hopeful democracies—democracies that respect human rights and individual liberties. We are a nation of freedom, where men and women can work hard, build a happy, healthy life, and live the American dream. That is what makes President Trump's anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant actions last week so repugnant.

I believe his actions violate the Constitution. They also violate everything we stand for as a country. Turning our

backs on refugees and those seeking a better life doesn't project strength. It shows weakness. It fuels anti-American rage around the world. Our Nation doesn't punish innocent people because of what they believe and who they pray to. We don't slam the door in the faces of those who need help the most.

I call on all of us, especially my colleagues across the aisle, to denounce this action and the people behind it. I am relieved that Federal judges around the nation are blocking the President's unconstitutional order, and I am also very proud of our strong constitutional system of checks and balances.

I can't express adequately how proud I am of Sally Yates, the Acting Attorney General who was fired by President Trump. Now you have to know something about her. This is a very courageous person who stood up and did the right thing. Sally Yates is a career prosecutor. She has served as a U.S. attorney in the U.S. attorney's office under Democrats and Republicans—a career prosecutor. When she was put up for a vote in the Senate, she got 84 votes when she was approved for Deputy Attorney General of the United States. This is someone who understands what is going on, understands the Constitution, and understands her legal obligations. She stood up and said that she wasn't going to represent in court the President on this Muslim ban, and he fired her. He fired her.

These kinds of actions are disturbing. They are un-American acts, and they are the most urgent reason I rise today to state that I cannot support confirming Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State.

There is no doubt that Mr. Tillerson was qualified to run ExxonMobil. Exxon was his first job out of college, and the only company he worked for during his 40-year career in the oil and gas industry. There is no doubt that Mr. Tillerson, as CEO and chairman of ExxonMobil, was 100 percent committed to making sure the best interests of the company's shareholders were served. But with no diplomatic experience or history of public service, I am not confident that Mr. Tillerson is qualified to serve as the United States' chief diplomat.

After studying his work and studying the history and his responses at the confirmation hearing and looking at his answers in writing, I do not believe that Mr. Tillerson is able to commit 100 percent to serving the best interests of the American people. Negotiating the complexities of oil and gas deals is not the same as negotiating the complexities of treaties and agreements with foreign governments.

ExxonMobil's top priority is profit. That is its reason for existence. Leaders negotiate business deals over money and access to resources. The United States and the American people have different priorities—sometimes conflicting priorities.

Our Nation is economically successful, for sure, and we value business and

we value making money, but our core values go way beyond economics. We value representative government, we value human rights, and we value freedom of speech. We value the four freedoms that President Roosevelt talked about when we entered into international agreements to spread the four freedoms around the world.

An incoming Secretary of State should not be learning on the job. He or she should already have substantial relevant experience. He or she should already have proven experience fighting for our Nation's core values, for human rights. Mr. Tillerson made it clear during his hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he lacks substantive foreign policy experience and knowledge. He told the committee many times that he was not familiar with the issues at hand or needed briefing. He must have said that a number of times. As just one example, Mr. Tillerson was unfamiliar with Russia's role in the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians in Syria. He had no opinion of the legality of the slaughter under international law. These are some of the most important, most urgent foreign policy matters we face, but he was unprepared to answer them.

Like Senators on both sides of the aisle, I am concerned about Mr. Tillerson's close personal business ties to the Russian Government. I am concerned about those. They may color his view of Russia. He has been long friends with Vladimir Putin. He has a highly profitable relationship with Igor Sechin, the head of the state-owned oil company Rosneft. I worry that these ties make it difficult or maybe even impossible for him to objectively evaluate Russia's actions and to act in America's best interests.

Are his close ties to Russia why he does not condemn Russia's actions in Syria? We cannot be sure. Mr. Tillerson also will not confirm whether he will advocate maintaining sanctions against Russia for invading Crimea. We know that the sanctions also continue to cost ExxonMobil because it is not able to drill for oil in Russia's Arctic.

Will Mr. Tillerson not commit to maintaining sanctions because of his ties to Russia? We cannot be sure.

In a third example, Mr. Tillerson would not commit to sanctions against Russia for its interference in our Presidential election. He said he didn't have enough information. Well, every U.S. security agency—all 17 of them—has concluded that the Russian Government hacked the Democratic National Committee, disclosed email from the hack from getting in there, and tried to influence our election. They agreed that these actions were authorized at the highest levels of the Russian Government, with fingers pointing right at Vladimir Putin. The intelligence community's public reports stated it this way:

We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016

aimed at the U.S. presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump—

Now President Trump—

We have high confidence in these judgments.

So 17 of our intelligence agencies pooled together all of their information, and they had high confidence in what they concluded there.

Mr. Tillerson had adequate information to make a strong statement against this attack, against this hacking, and in favor of American democracy. He did not make such a statement.

We must have a Secretary of State whose allegiance is 100 percent committed to U.S. interests. Mr. Tillerson's equivocating testimony on Russia did not convince me that he can be counted on to serve America's interests and America's interests only. Mr. Tillerson's equivocations mirror the Republicans' record on Russian interference in our democracy.

While the President has plans to dismantle the post-World War II international order, Republicans have done nothing to address Russia's attempt to dismantle our democracy.

I was also unsatisfied by Mr. Tillerson's answers on climate change. While he acknowledges the existence of climate change, he testified that "our ability to predict that effect is very limited" and that what action to take "seems to be the largest area of debate existing in the public discourse." That is not what the overwhelming majority of scientists tell us. Our ability to predict what is happening to the planet's climate is not "very limited," and there is international consensus written into the Paris Agreement as to what actions nations agree they must take. Scientists from all over the world have joined together through the United Nations and said that climate change is real and we have to take specific actions.

I appreciated that Rex Tillerson at least said that he believes the United States should remain at the table, but he questioned a key part of the Paris Agreement: the nationally determined contribution, or what is called the NDC. Without the NDC from the United States, the agreement is likely to fall apart, and his claimed support for the Paris Agreement becomes meaningless.

I cannot be clearer: Ignoring the threat of climate change is a direct threat to the United States. We have heard other Senators talk about the threat to their States, and it is a direct threat to my home State of New Mexico.

While President Trump may be trying to quiet our climate scientists, the science is clear. Climate change is real. We just finished the hottest year in re-

corded history. We know we must act, and we know there will be devastating impacts if the United States does not lead on this issue.

No matter what one believes about science or foreign policy, we should all be alarmed at the lack of transparency in the new administration, especially the unwillingness of our President and key Cabinet members to be open and honest with taxpayers about their finances and potential conflicts.

While Mr. Tillerson has divested from ExxonMobil, we still don't have copies of his tax returns. Mr. Tillerson's ties to ExxonMobil are decades old. Yet he has said he will recuse himself from matters related to ExxonMobil for only 1 year. For only 1 year will he recuse himself. He has worked for this company his entire life. He should refrain from taking calls from his old company for as long as he serves as Secretary of State. He is serving the country. He is serving in a taxpayer-funded job. I don't understand why he cannot agree to this simple standard to avoid the appearance of any conflict. If he deals favorably with ExxonMobil, how can the American people know he is working for us or for his former employer, which made him an extremely wealthy man?

But most concerning to me is whether Mr. Tillerson will be able to speak truth to power. We have just seen this weekend how vital that will be in this administration, where it appears that there is no unifying vision, and different factions of President Trump's Cabinet are competing for his attention. We need a leader with a clear vision for America's role in the world, someone who will put American values ahead of everything else.

Too many times, when pressed during his confirmation hearing about U.S. interests and values, Mr. Tillerson did not give straight answers. On questions such as human rights violations in the Philippines and Syria, he did not call out these offenses for what they were. On questions about whether we should maintain sanctions against Russia for illegally invading Crimea or for interfering with our electoral process, he deferred; he wavered; he said he would decide at a later date when he can be briefed or meet with the President. If Mr. Tillerson can't give straight answers, from the heart, about the most pressing human rights issues, on violations of international law, on a foreign power's interference with our Presidential election, how can we expect him to speak up and temper the worst angels in the Trump administration?

If Mr. Tillerson were the nominee for a more conventional Republican President, these concerns would not be as serious. But I think every Senator can agree that Donald Trump is not a conventional President. He is offending allies and upending alliances on a nearly daily basis. He has made negative statements about the German Chancellor's domestic policies. He is threatening to extort the Mexican Gov-

ernment to pay for an offensive and ineffective wall on America's southern border. He has repeatedly questioned NATO, the fundamental alliance that has secured peace between major powers since World War II. He is threatening to slash funding for the United Nations, including the World Health Organization, which fights global pandemics.

While addressing employees of the Central Intelligence Agency, standing in front of a wall honoring professionals who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms, President Trump threatened to take Iraq's oil—that he wanted to take another look at taking Iraq's oil—and he said: "To the victor go the spoils." This is a line attributed to Julius Caesar, who decreed himself Emperor. He began rattling the saber with China before he was sworn in.

The President has done all of this while repeatedly praising Vladimir Putin as a strong leader and proposing to improve relations there, while making them worse nearly everywhere else.

This weekend, he closed America's doors to Muslim refugees trying to escape the very evil our government is fighting against. He not only closed the doors to people who believe in our democratic institutions and the freedoms we enjoy, he closed the doors to people who have risked their lives in service of our ideals.

These are not normal changes in foreign policy between administrations. I would change many aspects of U.S. foreign policy if I could. But President Trump's approach to foreign policy so far is one of reckless change that is frankly scaring the American public and our allies around the world. In such a foreign policy environment, we need experienced, skilled hands, people who understand these allies and who understand our longstanding alliances and why we have them. But the President has fired all U.S. Ambassadors, and most high-level State Department employees have resigned or been forced out.

Mr. Tillerson, there is no doubt, is a talented businessman. He loves his country. He has devoted himself to other worthy causes, like the Boy Scouts. It is no exaggeration to say that the post-World War II international order is under attack by the President, endangering U.S. leadership in the world. As a result, our national security and place in the world are threatened like never before. During such tenuous times, we need a leader as our chief diplomat who is prepared to take the reins and calm the waters. But I do not have confidence that Mr. Tillerson has the experience, knowledge, values, or temperament to stand up to the President, to be a voice of reason, or to moderate the President's extreme views and actions. For these reasons, I oppose Mr. Tillerson's confirmation as Secretary of State, and I urge my fellow Members, including those who claimed the mantle of President Reagan, to do the same.

I know my good friend Senator MARKEY, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, is here on the floor, as well as Senator COONS, another member of the committee, and I think both of them will speak on the Tillerson nomination.

I yield to the Senator from Delaware, Mr. COONS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, after two long one-on-one meetings with Mr. Rex Tillerson, after a thorough confirmation hearing in the Foreign Relations Committee that stretched over some 9 hours, and after extensive additional research and reading and digging into his record, his public statements, and his views, I announced last week that I would oppose the nomination of Rex Tillerson to be Secretary of State of the United States.

I will say that over our meetings, our conversations, and my review of his record, I have come to respect Mr. Tillerson as a thoughtful and seasoned and capable professional in his line of work, with impressive international business experience. And I will say that his quick action to sever financial ties with ExxonMobil is a strong example that I wish President Trump had followed with regard to his own private business interests.

I found encouraging some of Mr. Tillerson's statements in the confirmation hearing and his public stances, including his commitment to NATO, his respect for U.S. leadership in multilateral initiatives, from the Paris climate change agreement to the Iran deal, and his support for development programs throughout the world but especially in Africa, a continent where I have been engaged in my 6 years on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

His nomination has the support of highly respected former officials, from Brent Scowcroft and Bob Gates to James Baker and Condoleezza Rice, former Secretaries and National Security Advisors.

But Mr. Tillerson and I disagree strongly on key issues. I believe, for example, that climate change is a pressing national security threat that must be addressed. Mr. Tillerson saw it somewhat differently. I believe in advocating for human rights, for a free press, and for democracy around the world because these principles advance our security and our economic interests here at home. I don't believe that human rights, press freedom, and democracy are add-ons, are things that we can address and deal with after national security is addressed. These are core to who we are as a nation and to the advocacy and engagement that I hope for and expect from our State Department and our next Secretary of State.

These are just a few of the reasons why I ultimately decided to oppose Mr. Tillerson's confirmation, but that is not why I have come to the floor today. I am here today principally because the

challenge we face is not whether a single nominee is the perfect person for this particular role; the challenge we and the American people now face is to determine the future we seek for our country and the world stage and whether we will choose to continue to lead the free world.

Do we envision the United States leading by example through actions that show we will stand by our values, especially when it is challenging or difficult? Do we envision the United States leading a coalition of democratic allies and Muslim partners around the world in the global fight on terrorism, defending each other and promoting values of human rights, the rule of law, and democracy? Or do we accept a dark and dystopian vision that sees the world in strict zero-sum terms whereby any win for our allies or partners is automatically a loss for America; a vision in which we could abandon our values for political gain; a vision that distances us from the world both by a literal wall and a growing gulf in priorities?

For decades, Republicans and Democrats have agreed on foundational principles of U.S. leadership in the world. We engage with the world. We consistently and reliably support our allies. We lead by example, especially on our core values. We fight for the rule of law, for human rights, and for democratic institutions because doing so makes us safer and more secure.

Consider our alliances. The Heritage Foundation accurately pointed out that supporting our allies overseas and in particular our treasured and enduring alliance with our NATO partners in Western Europe isn't charity but, rather, a proven method for keeping the United States safe and secure. As Heritage puts it, alliances prevent wars by driving up the cost of aggression. Alliances deter our rivals and adversaries. Alliances promote stability, help us project power, and enhance our legitimacy.

Why does this matter? Why is this a current matter of debate? Why is this a pressing concern in the context of this nomination and in the work of this body? Take, for example, Russia under Vladimir Putin. It is the unanimous view of all 17 U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia conducted and organized an intentional campaign of interfering in our 2016 Presidential election and that Russia conducted a cyber attack, authorized at the highest level, with the intention to influence the outcome of our election.

I cannot imagine a more direct frontal assault on who we are as a nation than to seek to influence our democratic election. But on top of that unprecedented attack on who we are as a nation, Vladimir Putin's Russia illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula and continues to support the murderous Assad regime in Syria. Today, Russia is preparing—even threatening—to intervene in upcoming elections across Central and Western Eu-

rope, including elections in our long-time close allies, France and Germany. It has been amassing troops on the borders of our NATO partners, such as Estonia and the other Baltic States, and conducting snap exercises up and down the border with NATO. It is precisely because of these acts of aggression that the NATO alliance is more relevant and more important than ever.

These aren't groundbreaking or controversial conclusions that I am reaching today. Yet President Trump's rhetoric as a candidate, his early actions as President, his compliments to Vladimir Putin, his claims that NATO is obsolete, and his intimation that he may not honor our article 5 mutual defense commitment to our NATO allies all call into question the President's understanding of the role that our alliances play. It also calls into question whether his administration understands the consequences of weakening or abandoning these alliance.

More than perhaps any nation on Earth, the United States has deeply benefited from the stable world order that we helped shape following the Second World War. After Americans went throughout the world to fight the forces of fascism and imperialism in the Pacific and the European theater in the Second World War, we sat astride the world as the most powerful country on Earth, with weapons possessed by no other, with the greatest manufacturing and military might on the planet, and we set about establishing an inclusive, rules-based, democratically oriented world order, from which we have benefited more than any other nation. NATO has become a key part of the alliances that we have relied on for that peace and stability in the seven decades since.

Let's not forget that the only time NATO invoked its mutual defense provision article 5 clause was when our allies came to our defense after 9/11. So to suggest that NATO is obsolete or outdated because it wasn't developed in a time where terrorism was a central threat gives a lie to the reality that our NATO allies have stood shoulder to shoulder with us and have fought alongside American service men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 1,000 have given their lives, and our NATO allies have poured their blood and treasure into our defense and into our joint conduct against our enemies in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Interpreters from Iraq and Afghanistan have kept our troops safe, and yet today those espousing "America First" would break our promises to these vital partners. I have to ask: To what end? When we turn our backs on our allies and friends, there are consequences. They may be prompted to seek to help themselves in new or unexpected or dangerous ways, such as developing their own nuclear capability or seeking armaments from Russia rather than working in partnership with us for their own security. They may seek to find new allies who do not,

in fact, share our values. In all these cases, “America First” may gradually, tragically, become instead “America Alone.” That leaves us less safe and closes off economic opportunities around the world. So in seeking out a strategy that is purported to make us safer and stronger, President Trump may, in fact, accomplish neither.

A policy of “America First” doesn’t just mean turning our backs on our allies and partners. It may also mean turning our backs on some of the world’s most vulnerable people, with real consequences here at home. The Executive order signed by President Trump just on Friday, banning all refugees from the United States for 120 days, banning refugees for 90 days from seven countries and indefinitely from Syria, caused chaos and confusion at our airports and instilled concern—even fear—in American families across our country.

I have a key question today, introduced earlier by Senator CARDIN, the ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, but not yet answered: Where does Rex Tillerson stand on this Executive order? How does he see it in our place in the world? How does he understand the centrality of the example that we show to the world in how we embrace human rights?

Sadly, I think this Executive order has validated the claims of jihadist groups like ISIS that recruit young men on the false claim that the West is at war with Islam, which is why these very terrorist groups are today cheering this Executive order. I think it has made us less safe by alienating Muslims in the United States and around the world. Why would we want to alienate the very Iraqis with whom we are training, serving, and fighting in the war against ISIS when they are a critical part of the ground forces that we are counting on to liberate Mosul from the tyranny of ISIS?

Most significantly, this Executive order may violate our Constitution and values by banning people based not on security concerns but on the basis of their religion, and by turning our backs on a decades-long commitment to welcome those fleeing credible fears of persecution, fleeing violence and chaos in their home countries. These may be the consequences of “America First.”

It is well known but bears repeating that in 1939, a ship called the St. Louis approached American shores bearing nearly 1,000 mostly Jewish refugees fleeing the horrors of the Nazi regime and the impending Holocaust. In one of our Nation’s most shameful chapters, the United States turned away these refugees seeking our shores. One passenger on board the St. Louis received a telegram from the U.S. Government instructing him that passengers must “await their turns on the waiting list and qualify for and obtain immigration visas before they may be admissible.” Most of these refugees were forced to return to Europe, where they were murdered by the Nazis.

This tragic episode from 1939, born of isolationism and, tragically, anti-Semitism and a mistaken sense that we could isolate ourselves from the challenges and the violence of the world was also part of a period when a group whose name was the America First Committee mobilized to try to prevent our entry into the Second World War.

I will say that these are the consequences of “America First.” The United States ultimately is less safe. Our allies may be made to feel uncertain or even betrayed. Americans will find themselves more fearful, and, our values, with which we have sought to lead the world, are cast aside.

That is why I believe this debate today is about far more than a single nominee for an important post in our State Department. American leadership on the world stage is not as simple as “America First,” and the consequences of truly embracing the dystopian vision of “America First,” I think, will be tragic.

If Mr. Tillerson is confirmed, it is my sincere and earnest hope that he will challenge President Trump to rethink the dark and dystopian view of the world that he laid out in his inaugural address, and that he will instead bend his skills, character, and qualities to the hard work of realigning our role in the world to the course that Republicans and Democrats together have steered from this floor and from this body for seven decades.

As the world saw last weekend, the new Trump administration desperately needs someone in the room to speak truth to power and to temper its worst impulses.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, will the Senator from Delaware yield?

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, the Senate’s advise and consent role is one of our most important duties as Senators, and the Secretary of State is one of the most important nominations we will consider. The Secretary of State is America’s chief diplomat, and he should project America’s values to the world.

Yesterday, I joined Senator SCHUMER in calling for a delay on Mr. Tillerson’s vote on the Senate floor until we hear from him about President Trump’s Muslim ban.

Turning away refugees based on their nationality and religion is un-American, it is illegal, and it is immoral. This Muslim ban is propaganda for ISIS. It is a recruiting gift to terrorist groups around the world and in our own country. It will increase the risk of harm to Americans everywhere, including here at home. Donald Trump is sending a message to Muslims around the world that they are all suspects. This has profound implications for our ability to work with governments in

the Middle East in the fight against terrorism. One of the countries named in this Executive order is Iraq, our closest ally in the fight against ISIS. Conflict and war is forcing millions around the world from their homeland. Donald Trump’s Muslim ban directly undermines our historic commitment to international cooperation and international refugee aid. That is why world leaders have joined the chorus of millions of Americans who do not support the Muslim ban.

America has always been a beacon to those fleeing persecution and violence. We are a refuge for those seeking a better life. The poetic inscription at the base of the Statue of Liberty does not say: Send back “your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” As our top diplomat, Mr. Tillerson will be in a position to work directly with the nations named in this Executive order, and we need to hear how he believes it will impact our standing around the world.

With respect to Mr. Tillerson’s nomination, I have very serious concerns. Rex Tillerson could have enjoyed his retirement after spending more than 40 years at ExxonMobil. Instead, he answered the call to enter public service, and I commend him for that. His record at ExxonMobil is one that clearly has received accolades. He did a good job for ExxonMobil. He is highly respected in the oil industry. But public service requires the public’s trust, and Mr. Tillerson will not have that trust unless he agrees to recuse himself from participating in decisions that would affect ExxonMobil for the entirety of his term. So far, he has refused to do so.

Our laws require Federal officials to recuse themselves when a reasonable person could question their impartiality. Before President Trump nominated him to be Secretary of State, Mr. Tillerson worked for one company—ExxonMobil—for virtually his entire adult life. As he rose to become a senior manager and then CEO, Mr. Tillerson was personally involved in getting lucrative oil deals in a number of countries, including Russia. In fact, during Mr. Tillerson’s time as CEO of ExxonMobil, the company expanded its drilling rights in Russia to 63 million acres. That is an area the size of Wyoming and nearly five times the size of Exxon’s holdings in the United States.

But Mr. Tillerson didn’t just deepen the relationship between his company and Russia. He also tried to protect that relationship by speaking out against sanctions on Russia. As a reward for personally cementing Exxon’s relationship with Russia, President Vladimir Putin awarded Mr. Tillerson the Russian Order of Friendship.

The stakes with U.S.-Russia relations could not be higher. Russia has invaded the Ukraine, annexed Crimea, bombed innocent civilians in Aleppo, and attacked our elections with cyber weapons. Our next Secretary of State will be negotiating with Russia on

some of the most critical foreign policy issues facing the world.

Mr. Tillerson's decades-long history at ExxonMobil and Exxon's vast holdings in Russia clearly create a conflict of interest. How can the American people be sure Mr. Tillerson will be objective when he participates in matters relating to sanctions on Russia or in any matters that could affect Exxon in the dozens of other countries in the world where Exxon operates?

As the top ethics lawyers for Presidents Bush and Obama have said, these conflicts could require Mr. Tillerson to recuse himself from any matters affecting ExxonMobil, irrespective of his financial divestitures. When I asked Mr. Tillerson during his confirmation hearing whether he would commit to recuse himself without waiver or exception from matters affecting Exxon for the duration of his tenure as Secretary of State, he refused. That is unacceptable. The American people and the national security of the United States demand a Secretary of State whose impartiality is unambiguous.

Make no mistake, the stockholders of ExxonMobil would have serious questions about hiring the leader of the Sierra Club to be the new CEO of Exxon. We, too, should have questions about hiring ExxonMobil's former CEO to be America's chief diplomat.

If he agreed to recuse himself, Mr. Tillerson would be following a tradition that is longstanding and bipartisan. Secretary of State James Baker recused himself from participating in any matter that could affect the price of oil and gas. Treasury Secretary Hank Paulson promised not to participate in any matter where Goldman Sachs was a party. And all of President Obama's appointees recused themselves from any matters related to their former employers or clients. Mr. Tillerson's refusal to follow their example will call into question his impartiality, and it could undermine his effectiveness as Secretary.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Tillerson displayed an alarming lack of understanding of oil's role in geopolitics—clearly a consequence of having worked solely at Exxon—that disqualifies him from being Secretary of State.

When I questioned him, Mr. Tillerson told me that he never had supported U.S. energy independence. He told me that he didn't agree that reducing America's demand for oil and our reliance on foreign oil imported from the Middle East would strengthen our negotiating position with oil-producing nations.

We as a nation still import 5 million barrels of oil every single day into the United States. Three million of those barrels a day come from OPEC members, such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Nigeria. ExxonMobil has energy interests in each one of those countries. And we are still exporting our own young men and women in uniform overseas to defend those energy interests every single day.

Mr. Tillerson is looking at the world through oil-coated glasses. He may have gotten rid of Exxon's stock, but he hasn't gotten rid of Exxon's mindset.

Mr. Tillerson's answers to questions about climate change—the global generational challenge of our time—are a cause for extreme concern. Although he recognized that climate change is real and human activities influenced it, he would not commit to continuing action on it as a foreign policy priority. Throughout his hearing, Mr. Tillerson would only say that he wanted to keep a seat at the table of climate negotiations. The United States needs to have more than a seat at the table; we need to be at the head of the table.

In December 2015, 150 heads of state gathered in support of finalizing the Paris climate accord. It represents a global solution to the problem of global warming in which all countries commit to doing their fair share. Instead of strengthening this historic accord, Mr. Tillerson indicated that all treaties and agreements to which the United States is a party would be up for review by President Trump.

America needs a Secretary of State who will lead the world to fully realize the clean energy revolution that will help us avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change while creating millions of jobs. To abandon the Paris climate accord would be to abandon our clean energy future. We cannot roll back years of progress cutting dangerous carbon emissions or deploying clean energy solutions.

For 41 years, Rex Tillerson's world view has been to advance the interests of one place and one place only—ExxonMobil. Confirming Mr. Tillerson as Secretary of State would be turning over the keys of U.S. foreign policy to Big Oil. Big Oil's interests are not America's interest. If Mr. Tillerson were to negotiate with Russia and President Putin, whose interests will he represent—those of Big Oil or those of the American people? I still do not have satisfactory answers to that critical question. For those reasons, I cannot vote for his confirmation.

I thank you for allowing me to speak at this time on the Senate floor.

I yield to the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. MURPHY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, since assuming office on January 20, which is just 11 days ago—I don't know, it kind of feels to me like it was 11 months ago; this is going on in a horrible, nightmarish slow motion—the Trump administration has assumed responsibility for our Nation's national security. There are a lot of jobs the President has, this new administration has, but that is at the top of the list—guaranteeing this country's security and, frankly, being the guarantor of global security.

Leaving aside some of the broader systemic challenges that we face in the

world, let's just look at what has happened since the inauguration.

Yesterday, Iran reportedly conducted another ballistic missile test. President Trump criticized President Obama on Iran for being too soft. Now it is his turn to get China and Russia to agree to a Security Council resolution condemning this test and taking punitive action.

On Sunday, extremist groups all around the world celebrated the Trump administration's ban on travel from seven Muslim-majority countries. Comments that were posted to pro-Islamic State's social media accounts predicted that the Executive order would serve as a recruiting tool for ISIS. One posting said that Trump's actions "clearly revealed the truth and harsh reality behind the American government's hatred towards Muslims." Another posting hailed Trump as "the best caller to Islam." Another one talked about the ban being a blessed ban, which is a reference to what militant leaders called the invasion of Iraq, which was hailed then as the blessed invasion, becoming the cause celebre, as the intelligence community called it, for the global jihadist movement.

Immediately following the first phone conversation between Trump and Putin, the conflict in Ukraine flared up. Likely not coincidentally, 8 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 26 were wounded just since Saturday.

In the Balkans, where Russia has been just recently again steadily increasing in influence, as Europe is pulling up the doors on its new perspective members, Serbia sent a train emblazoned with the motto "Kosovo is Serbia" up to the border of Kosovo. It turned around, but as a result, troops and security forces reportedly scrambled to the border from both sides.

I am not suggesting that all of these bad things happened because Donald Trump was inaugurated. I listened to my colleagues explain all of the world's troubles for 8 years through the lens of responsibility to the Obama administration. But this is all an advertisement for a very simple idea—that this is probably the absolute worst time to have the first American President with no government experience and no diplomatic experience pick the first Secretary of State with no government experience and no diplomatic experience. This is not the moment for on-the-job learning. Yet that is what we have so far.

Granted Mr. Tillerson is not in place, but President Trump's foreign policy up to this point has been tragically amateurish. Witness the invitation for the Mexican leader to come to the White House, worked out in painstaking detail, an opportunity to show, despite the furor and rhetoric of the campaign, solidarity between the American and Mexican people, and then Donald Trump sends out a tweet daring the Mexican leader to cancel the meeting, which he promptly does, erupting threats of a trade war.

Witness Friday's Muslim ban, which now has Muslim nations all around the world rethinking their relationship with the United States, sending this dangerous message to people all around the world that you have no home in the United States if you practice one particular faith.

It begs the question as to whether Mr. Tillerson is going to be able to right this ship, having no experience working on almost every single one of these issues that confront us around the world. It is not the same thing to run a global business and run the State Department.

Frankly, I would argue that Mr. Tillerson's experience—even if you believe he did a good job for Exxon, it doesn't advertise him as a good candidate for Secretary of State. In fact, we have reason to fear that Mr. Tillerson would run the State Department like he ran Exxon, where he repeatedly worked against U.S. national interests.

Mr. Tillerson opposed sanctions levied against Russia in the wake of their invasion of Ukraine. He tried to pull one over on the committee, telling the committee this ridiculous story of first not lobbying Congress on sanctions, then not knowing if Exxon was lobbying for or against sanctions. That just doesn't pass the smell test. He called the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to express his misgivings about sanctions. He personally lobbied Congress against the sanctions. His company spent millions of dollars lobbying against the sanctions.

When asked by President Obama and his administration to refrain from attending a major economic development conference hosted by Vladimir Putin in the middle of the Ukraine crisis, Tillerson thumbed his nose at America. He intentionally embarrassed his own country and our allies by sending his top deputy to that conference—and it gets worse—and standing next to Russian officials to announce major new contracts with Russia. Think about that. We begged Exxon to stay away from that conference. Not only did they go, but Tillerson had his No. 2 guy announce new contracts in the middle of the sanctions, in the middle of the worst of the crisis with Ukraine. It is not surprising that he was awarded the Order of Friendship by Vladimir Putin 3 years ago.

Just an aside, I have listened to my colleagues castigate President Obama for being weak on Russia for years. Frankly, the only thing that has been consistent about Candidate Trump and President Trump's foreign policy has been a marshmallow-like softness on Russia. At every turn, Trump has previewed for you that he is going to be easy on Vladimir Putin. Tillerson's testimony cemented that. He was asked over and over whether he would commit to holding the line on existing sanctions, whether he would commit to imposing new sanctions based on Russian interference in the U.S. elections.

He was asked by the Presiding Officer if he would, at the very least, commit to holding in place the sanctions on the individuals who were named as those interfering with the U.S. election. He wouldn't commit to any of it, and so it is hard for me to understand how all of the Republicans who have been eviscerating President Obama for 8 years for being soft on Russia are now supporting the nomination of Rex Tillerson, who has basically advertised that they are going to withdraw the line the Obama administration had taken and enter into a new relationship with Russia, in which they likely get everything they want. I hope that is not true, but we have asked over and over again for this nominee to give us some signal that they are going to at least maintain the policies we have today, and we have gotten no satisfactory answer.

Lastly, maybe most concerning about this nominee, is the potential for him to carry with him from Exxon a total lack of concern for ethics. I understand business ethics. That sounds really harsh, right? I understand there is a difference between business ethics and government ethics, and human rights is not something you are going to care about in a business to the extent that we care about it as those who run and advocate for American foreign policy. But I asked Mr. Tillerson if there was any country in the world he wasn't willing to do business with as the leader of Exxon. He danced around the answer a little bit, but the simple response was no, and that is plain as day. We can look at the countries they did business with, including Syria through subsidiaries, including Iran. There was no human rights record that was bad enough for Exxon to say: Hey, no. This isn't something we want to touch.

We have been told by those who are supporting his nomination that we really shouldn't pay attention to everything he did at Exxon because he is going to be a new man when he comes to State. I guess you can understand that. Plenty of people take on new priorities when they come into new jobs. Plenty of people argue for something they argued against once they have a new boss, but he had a chance before the Foreign Relations Committee to tell us how serious he was about human rights. He got asked over and over again what he thought about human rights violations by some of the worst offenders around the world. His answers to those questions were, boy, they were disturbing and troubling. He wouldn't name Saudi Arabia as a human rights violator. Saudi Arabia is locking up political dissidents left and right. They don't allow women to drive. I understand they are an ally, but they are also a human rights violator. Everybody knows that. He wouldn't commit that President Duterte in the Philippines, who has been openly bragging about murdering thousands of civilians with no due

process—wouldn't name him as a human rights violator, wouldn't say that what Russia has done in Aleppo is a war crime. I understand that maybe you don't know all the facts when you are just coming through the process, but you just have to pick up a newspaper to figure out what is going on in Manila or what is happening in Aleppo. It doesn't take a lot of research to know that Saudi Arabia is violating people's human rights. He knows that country very well.

It suggests that this lack of concern for ethics and human rights is going to carry over to the State Department, and of course he is working for a President who is never going to tell him to care about human rights. The President has openly talked about his affection for torture; how he thinks that strong leaders are the ones who kill journalists who oppose them.

So it looks as if we are seeing a preview of an abdication of America's historic role in promoting and pushing human rights around the world. We have a President who has openly mocked human rights, who has supported vicious dictators, and a Secretary of State who has made a career of doing business with some of the worst human rights violators in the world and who couldn't name human rights violators when he appeared before the committee.

Senator MARKEY is right. Mr. Tillerson is an accomplished businessman. He is smart. He is savvy. I don't say any of this to impugn his character. He had a job to do at Exxon, and he did it well on behalf of those shareholders. Frankly, he didn't have to take this job. He didn't have to subject himself to this spotlight, to the constant second-guessing that awaits him as the next American Secretary of State. So I give him credit for making this decision to step up to the plate and do this job. I think his motives are pure. I guess I can't assume anything else. I know there are people who question those motives, but I am going to assume that he is doing this because he wants to help his country, and I look forward to working with him.

He needs to be an advocate for the State Department. He needs to be an advocate for the nonmilitary tools that have not historically been available to the President. We have had a "military first" mentality as a country. We think every problem in the world can be solved through military intervention. Even under President Obama, there was a bent toward military solutions. A Secretary of State can be the chief spokesman here for the ways in which you solve problems that don't involve attacking and invading, but I don't think somebody who has done one thing with one set of priorities and values for 40 years just suddenly does an about-face, and adopts a totally different set of priorities and values for his career's capstone job. If that were the case, he could have previewed that for us in the committee hearing. Yet

over and over again, when we asked for evidence that his priorities and his values were changed, his answers didn't measure up.

As I said, in addition to those concerns, this is just not the time for a Secretary of State with no diplomatic experience whatsoever. It is not a time for our new Secretary of State to learn on the job.

I will oppose his nomination and I hope others will join me.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I yield 15 minutes under my control to the Senator from Massachusetts, Ms. WARREN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has that right.

The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the nomination of Rex Tillerson to serve as Secretary of State. Shortly after President Trump's election, I wrote to him about what I thought was a mutual interest, taking on a rigged system in Washington where powerful interests call the shots. For too long, I have heard from Wisconsinites who feel that Washington's economic and political system is broken. People are angry because they feel that our government institutions seem to work for Big Banks or Big Oil but not for them.

President Trump clearly tapped into this widely held dissatisfaction when he announced his plan to reduce the influence of special interests in government by draining the swamp. Yet with appointment after appointment, it has been made clear that President Trump is not interested in ridding the government of powerful interests. In fact, he continues to appoint and nominate foxes to guard the henhouse.

We don't need to look back very far to know what can happen when we let industry insiders run our government. The 2008 financial crisis was a result of years of deregulation pushed by Wall Street from both inside and outside the government. Last Congress, I introduced legislation to slow the revolving door and ensure that our public servants are working for the public interest, not their former—or future, for that matter—employers. I was inspired to introduce this legislation when I saw several Obama administration appointees receive multimillion-dollar bonuses for leaving their private sector jobs to join the government. These government service golden parachutes, as they are known, demonstrate how valuable some companies believe it is to have friends in high places.

Rex Tillerson, the President's nominee to serve as Secretary of State, received a \$180 million payout from ExxonMobil that he would have to forfeit had he taken a job elsewhere. What is more, reports indicate that the deal he struck allows him to defer paying 71 million in taxes. It is hard to imagine that our Nation's top diplomat will forget such an incredible favor, but Rex Tillerson isn't the only Trump ap-

pointee who will be rewarded with a golden parachute as he enters government. Gary Cohn, the President's pick to run the National Economic Council, will receive over 100 million from his former employer, Goldman Sachs, before he starts to coordinate an administration-wide economic policy.

I remain as opposed to this practice under the Trump administration as I was during the Obama administration. Wisconsin families cannot afford to have corporate insiders running our government to rig the rules on behalf of their former corporations. That is why I am reintroducing the Financial Services Conflict of Interest Act, to ensure that our government is truly of the people, by the people, and for the people of the United States, to ensure that President Trump's Cabinet officials are working in the national interests instead of their own interests, to ensure that they are working for their current employers, the American people, instead of their former bosses.

In the case of Mr. Tillerson, whose nomination the Senate is voting on this week, these questions of influence, of favoritism and priorities are particularly troubling, troubling because during his tenure leading Exxon, Mr. Tillerson showed a disregard, if not outright contempt at times, for putting U.S. policy first. Whether in the Middle East, Africa or Russia, Exxon's bottom line was his overriding priority. Now, with 180 million of Exxon's money in his pocket—and after 40 years with the company—should we take it on faith that his priorities will suddenly change? Should we blindly accept that the 180 million will not ever influence his decisionmaking or should we continue to ask questions, questions that Rex Tillerson has yet to answer?

For example, how will Exxon and Big Business influence U.S. policy in strategically important but democratically fragile oil-producing African states? How about U.S. international commitments to combatting climate change, one of our greatest national security challenges but also a challenge that Big Oil has dismissed as a hoax. Perhaps most concerning, what influence will Exxon have in matters relating to Russia, where its long record of doing business at the expense of U.S. national security interests seems to be right at home in the Trump administration?

We also need to hear what Rex Tillerson thinks about President Trump's actions this weekend. On Friday, President Trump issued anti-refugee and anti-immigrant Executive orders. I am outraged by the way these orders were hastily thrown together late Friday. The President's sloppy actions created chaos, disorder, and confusion at our airports, and it left families, including permanent legal residents, wondering what it meant for them. There have been media reports that relevant agencies, including the State Department, were not consulted

before this order was signed by President Trump. President Trump says we need extreme vetting of refugees fleeing war-torn nations. The refugees—the vast majority of whom are women and children—already go through an extremely strict screening process before they are allowed to enter the country.

What we really need extreme vetting of is President Trump's Executive orders before he signs them. With the stroke of a pen, President Trump's orders will make ISIS stronger, weaken America's counterterrorism efforts, and likely cost lives. It is wrong to turn our back on our American values and the rest of the world. We are better than this.

President Trump and Republicans in Congress should reverse these shameful actions immediately. I am proud to be cosponsoring legislation that would do just that. We need to know where Rex Tillerson stands on those very same issues. Does he oppose welcoming refugees into the country, which strengthens America's connection with freedom, the foundation of who we are as a people? Was Mr. Tillerson consulted by the President before these orders were issued? Mr. Tillerson owes it to the American people to answer those questions before the Senate votes on his confirmation.

What happened the day after President Trump issued these Executive orders? On Saturday, President Trump called Vladimir Putin to discuss a more cozy relationship with Russia. What does Mr. Tillerson think about this call? According to reports, it was a warm conversation and resulted in preparations for a meeting between President Trump and Vladimir Putin, the same Vladimir Putin who illegally invaded Ukraine and actively seeks to divide and destroy NATO, our most important security alliance; the same Vladimir Putin who is responsible for directing cyber attacks meant to influence and undermine our elections and our Democratic process; the same Vladimir Putin who fights alongside the murderous Syrian dictator, Bashar al-Assad, and is responsible for war crimes, indiscriminately bombing innocent civilians in Aleppo; the same Vladimir Putin who gave Rex Tillerson the Order of Friendship following his business dealings in Russia.

We need a Secretary of State who understands the threats posed by nations like Russia, not someone who is cozy with Vladimir Putin. We need a nominee with experience in foreign affairs and foreign policy, not a billionaire oil tycoon who has spent his career fighting to ensure that government policies help the oil industry. Rex Tillerson is not this nominee.

For all these reasons, I oppose the nomination of Rex Tillerson to serve as U.S. Secretary of State. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do the same.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

TRAVEL BAN

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I would like to address some of the very serious concerns posed by the nomination of Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State, along with several of President Trump's Cabinet nominees. But first I do want to briefly address what unfolded this weekend at airports across the country following President Trump's appalling and un-American ban on Muslims and refugees from entering the country.

With the stroke of a pen, the Trump administration caused chaos and heartbreak for hundreds of families, many of whom are our friends, our neighbors, and our coworkers. On Saturday night, Members of this Congress, including myself, were denied answers to even the most basic questions from border enforcement officers, questions that affect the people whom we represent.

While I am glad that a Federal judge quickly issued a stay and that the Department of Homeland Security has since provided further guidance on the Executive orders, many questions remain and too many lives hang in the balance.

I am going to keep fighting as hard as I can, and I encourage everyone who is listening and watching right now to continue making their voices heard because President Trump is already governing the way he campaigned, by dividing our country and pushing extreme policies that hurt families across the country. Again, we saw this so clearly in the Executive orders he signed this past week.

But it is also something we have seen in the Cabinet nominees he has put forward since his election. As we all remember, President Trump said that he was going to drain the swamp, but he seems to think the way to do that is by filling it with even bigger swamp creatures. He said he was going to stand with the working class and fight Wall Street and Big Business. But he nominated a Cabinet full of Wall Street bankers and billionaires and millionaires and friends and insiders and campaign contributors.

As many of my colleagues have discussed today, one clear example of President Trump's broken promise to drain the swamp is the nomination of Rex Tillerson, CEO of ExxonMobil for Secretary of State. This is a nominee who is not only a known friend and business partner to Russia, but someone who publicly spoke against sanctions on Russia after the invasion of Ukraine and Crimea.

People in my home State of Washington have significant concerns about who he plans to work for, and so do I—concerns that Mr. Tillerson failed to adequately address in his hearing. I have said before that reports of Russia meddling in our election should disturb and outrage every American, Democrat, Republican, or Independent who believes that the integrity of our elections is fundamental to the strength of this democracy. That is why it is so

critical we have a Secretary of State who will stand up to protect those values.

NOMINATIONS OF BETSY DEVOS, TOM PRICE, AND ANDREW PUZDER

Mr. President, along with Rex Tillerson, I have serious concerns with the nominees that are going through our Senate HELP Committee, as well as the vetting process that has taken place.

My Republican colleagues rushed us into a hearing on President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, for example. When we started the hearing, the Republican Chairman, the senior Senator from Tennessee, preemptively declared he would be limiting questions to just 5 minutes per Member, a shocking and disappointing breach of committee tradition, clearly intended to limit public scrutiny.

When the questions began, it quickly became clear why Republicans felt the need to protect her. Ms. DeVos refused to rule out slashing investments in or privatizing public schools. She was confused about the need for Federal protections for students with disabilities. She argued that guns needed to be allowed in schools across the country to "protect from grizzlies."

Even though she was willing to say that President Trump's behavior toward women should be considered sexual assault, she would not commit to actually enforcing Federal law, protecting women and girls in our schools.

I would say I was shocked at this candidate's lack of qualifications to serve, but at this point, you know what, nothing surprises me when it comes to President Trump's new administration.

As was the case with Ms. DeVos, Democrats were also unable to thoroughly question President Trump's nominee for Health and Human Services, Congressman TOM PRICE. I can understand why Republicans would not want Congressman TOM PRICE to defend his policies, which would take health care coverage away from families, voucherize Medicare, and undermine women's access to reproductive health services, despite President Trump's comments to make health care better for patients and even provide insurance for everybody. These are issues that families and communities do deserve to hear about, and they also deserve a thorough investigation into serious questions about whether Congressman PRICE had access to non-public information when he made certain medical stock trades while he was in the House.

Lastly, I have to say, I have grown increasingly concerned that President Trump's nominee for Secretary of Labor, Andrew Puzder, represents yet another broken promise of his to put workers first. On issue after issue, Andrew Puzder has made clear that he will do what is best for big businesses, like his own, at the expense of workers and families.

He has spoken out against a strong increase in the minimum wage. He has been one of the most vocal opponents of our efforts to update the rules so that millions more workers can earn their overtime pay.

Puzder has even talked about replacing workers with robots because "they never take a vacation, they never show up late, there's never a slip-and-fall, or an age, sex, or race discrimination case." That is a quote from Puzder.

He has aggressively defended his company's offensive ads, leaving women across the country wondering whether he can be trusted in a role that is so critical to women's rights and safety in the workplace.

All of that makes a lot of sense coming from a millionaire CEO who profits off of squeezing his own workers. But it is very concerning coming from a potential Secretary of Labor, someone who should be standing up for our workers and making sure they get treated fairly, rather than mistreated.

So, now more than ever, people across the country want to know how the Trump administration will continue to impact their lives. We Democrats consider it our job to stand up when President Trump tries to hurt the families whom we represent. We are ready to stand with families we represent, to hold him and his administration accountable, and we refuse to back down and are prepared to fight back.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong opposition to President Trump's nomination of Rex Tillerson to be the next Secretary of State. There are many, many reasons to oppose this nomination, and my colleague from Washington has just listed several of them. But the main reason for me is as simple as it is disturbing: Tillerson's extensive and long-standing ties with Russia mean that the United States of America simply cannot trust him to be a strong advocate for the interests of our country.

Here is what has been publicly reported. Our intelligence agencies have concluded that the Russian Government conducted a successful series of cyber attacks on the United States designed to help Donald Trump get elected President. Intelligence chiefs have briefed the President on a dossier alleging that the Russian Government has collected compromising information on him. And in response, the President has attacked the intelligence community.

This week, he installed his political crony, Steve Bannon, a man with ties to White nationalists, on the National Security Council while marginalizing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of National Intelligence.

Now, there is significant reason to believe that the President has extensive financial relationships with Russia, but nobody actually knows any of