

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 longstanding 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

the details because he has refused to release his tax returns. And, apparently, the President's own national security adviser is currently under FBI investigation for his own interactions with the Russian Government.

This is only the 12th day of the Trump Presidency, and this is what is going on right now—12 days. I wish this weren't happening. I wish things were normal, but this is not normal. We cannot simply ignore all of this as we evaluate the President's nominees to critical foreign policy and national security jobs.

I have heard some people say that Rex Tillerson doesn't know anything about diplomacy or have any experience with foreign policy. I actually think that is wrong.

For the last decade, Tillerson has served as the CEO of ExxonMobil, a massive company that would have roughly the 42nd largest economy in the entire world if it were its own country. As the leader of that giant oil company, Tillerson was an expert at diplomacy; specifically, how to advance the interests of his own fabulously wealthy oil company and himself, no matter the consequences for American foreign policy toward Russia.

Russia has vast oil resources, and Exxon is one of the world's largest oil companies. Getting at that oil is a critical priority for Exxon—such a high priority, in fact, that when it came time to pick a new CEO, Exxon chose Tillerson, who had spent years managing the company's Russia efforts. This isn't just a passing coincidence. Tillerson has worked closely with Putin's senior lieutenants, and, in 2013, Tillerson received the highest honor that the Kremlin gives to foreigners.

Tillerson's Russia projects ran into trouble the following year, however, because after Russia invaded Ukraine and started illegally annexing territory, Europe and the United States slapped sanctions on Russia. Those sanctions made life more difficult for Exxon, so Tillerson ignored them. He forged ahead despite the sanctions, signing more agreements with Russia, and then he used his army of well-funded lobbyists to undermine our sanctions with Russia.

When confronted with the facts about this in his confirmation hearing, Tillerson first pretended that he didn't know if the company had lobbied at all. And then later, he said: Well, the company simply participated in discussions with lawmakers without actually taking a position.

He is saying that they paid their lobbyists to show up and just talk generally, not to advance what the company wanted. You know, when you hear something that lame, you wonder just how dumb he thinks we are.

Mr. Tillerson has argued that in his job at Exxon he was advocating for the interests of his giant oil company. And he understands that being Secretary of State is a different job.

Really? At his hearing, Tillerson lamented that when sanctions are im-

posed, "by their design, [they] are going to harm American businesses"—as though the principal question the Secretary of State should be asking when deciding whether to hold Russia accountable for hacking our elections or for annexing Crimea is whether it might dent the bottom line of a powerful oil company.

And has Tillerson really separated himself from Exxon? Tillerson is receiving a massive \$180 million golden parachute for becoming Secretary of State—\$180 million. It is a special payout that he wouldn't get if he were taking some other job. He is getting it only because he is coming to work for the government.

I have opposed these parachutes for many years now, and many of us have worked on legislation to make them criminally illegal—many of us. I have opposed nominees in my own party over them because if your employer offered you \$180 million to go to work for the government, that looks an awful lot like a bribe for future services. This kind of payment raises questions about whether you work for the government, for a multinational oil company, or for both at the same time. America deserves a Secretary of State who works for the American people, period.

Will Tillerson help Exxon while he is in office? Well, the law requires him to recuse himself from any matters involving this company for how long? For just 1 year.

Common sense requires Tillerson, who, again, is receiving a \$180 million special payment from the company where he has worked his entire adult life—common sense requires him to recuse himself from all matters involving Exxon for the entirety of his time in government. But when pressed by my Massachusetts colleague, Senator MARKEY, Tillerson flatly refused to do it.

Mr. Tillerson's views, experiences, relationships, and compromising arrangements with Russia aren't my only problem with this nomination, not by a long shot.

Mr. Tillerson's company has spent years lying about climate change. In Massachusetts, we have laws about consumer fraud: telling people lies about your product, lies that could make a difference about whether or not customers want to buy it. The Massachusetts attorney general, Maura Healy, has been investigating whether Exxon deliberately misled people about the impact of climate change on our economy, on our environment, on our health, and on our future.

Exxon didn't want to answer, so they bullied and stonewalled all the way. But it hadn't worked. In fact, our attorney general won a court ruling earlier this month, and Exxon is being forced to hand over 40 years' worth of internal documents that will show what the company knew about climate change, when they knew it, and whether they lied to their customers, their investors, and the American public.

Tillerson bobbed and weaved on climate change at his confirmation hearing. I wonder if he is just trying to avoid accidentally saying anything that might help Massachusetts finally find out and hold his company accountable for massive fraud. Look, that may be OK for a CEO, but that is not good enough for someone who wants to be our Nation's Secretary of State.

Climate change is a defining issue of our time, and the last thing we should do is hand our foreign policy over to someone who cares more about lining his own pockets than the survival of our planet.

I could go on at length about the glaring problems with Mr. Tillerson's nomination. It is amazing how far we have fallen, to go from John Kerry, an accomplished statesman, combat veteran, Presidential candidate, long-time public servant, and son of Massachusetts, to a billionaire with a golden parachute and no record of public service or putting American foreign policy interests ahead of his own corporate interests.

When we vote, Senators should understand this: Handing American foreign policy over to the leader of a giant oil company is not something we do in the United States; it is something Vladimir Putin would do in Russia.

Donald Trump is building his Presidency in the image of Vladimir Putin, and that is good for Russia, but it is a real problem for America.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I rise to speak in opposition to the confirmation of Rex Tillerson, the President's nominee to be Secretary of State, and I will tell you why in two words: Vladimir Putin.

Rex Tillerson's ties to Russia have been widely reported. The Senator from Massachusetts has outlined a number of them, specifically his ties to President Putin, who awarded him the Order of Friendship after signing deals with the state-owned oil company, Rosneft.

Now isn't the time to cozy up to Russia. Now is the time to stand up to Russian aggression in Crimea, in eastern Ukraine, and Syria.

Just yesterday, we heard reports of another outbreak of fighting between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists in war-torn eastern Ukraine. And all you have to do is speak to a Ukrainian and let them tell you—as I met with the former Prime Minister yesterday, and I will be meeting with a former Member of their Parliament, let them tell you what it is like to have the Russian Army march on your country and take part of it away, as they did with Crimea, and then come in under the disguise of little green men, as if they did not have ties to the Russian Army. That is going on in eastern Ukraine right now.

Our own intelligence community has told us that the Russian President personally ordered a campaign to influence the 2016 Presidential election

right here in the United States. That campaign—a mix of covert Russian operations, cyber attacks, cyber operations, and propaganda—was only the latest in a series of efforts to undermine American leadership and democracies around the world and what is coming next for the elections in Europe in the next few months.

Russia is testing us, and I am concerned that Mr. Tillerson cannot stand up to the Russian President who, I am afraid, thinks of himself as the next Russian czar.

In Mr. Tillerson's past, as Exxon's CEO, he lobbied against sanctions on Russia for invading and seizing Crimea—the very sanctions that we and our allies have put on Russia for taking over sovereign territory of another independent country. And now it is not clear, as our Nation's top diplomat, that Mr. Tillerson would fight to keep the sanctions in place, even as President Trump is now considering lifting them, despite the clear evidence of Russia's continued aggression.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Tillerson refused to condemn the Russian and Syrian bombings in Aleppo as war crimes, a question that was proffered to him by the Senator, my colleague from Florida, who happens to sit in the Chair right now.

I also have serious concerns that Mr. Tillerson doesn't understand the urgent need to combat climate change. You don't have to remind us about climate change in Florida. South Florida is ground zero for climate change. Miami Beach is awash at the seasonal high tides as the water flows over the curbs and over the streets, causing Miami Beach to spend hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars to install pump stations, raise the roads, and address all kinds of flooding and salt-water intrusion. Other South Florida communities have had to move their water well locations farther west because of the intrusion of South Florida into the freshwater aquifer.

Climate change is not a problem that we are going to face some day in the future; it is a daily struggle for communities along our coasts all over America. The U.S. State Department is responsible for engaging with other countries to confront both the cause of climate change and the devastating impact of drought, sea level rise, and severe weather.

By the way, speaking of sea level rise, this Senator convened a meeting of the Senate Commerce Committee in Miami Beach a couple of years ago. We had testimony from a NASA scientist that measurements—not forecasts, not projections, but measurements—in the last 40 years of sea level rise in South Florida were 5 to 8 inches higher. That is sea level rise. That is why even the Department of Defense is concerned. Climate change has the potential to destabilize nations. How about Bangladesh? It has the potential to drastically reduce potable water supplies and result in crop loss and food shortage and to create climate refugees.

We simply cannot play fast and loose with the science that will help save our planet. The top diplomat of our country has to confront the reality of climate change today and to work on it immediately. Mr. Tillerson has not adequately laid out a plan to address that global climate crisis.

For all the reasons I have outlined, including many more, I will vote no.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, as the Presiding Officer well knows, the Secretary of State is one of the most important positions in the President's Cabinet. He is the Nation's chief diplomat, and he champions American values. He is the symbol in a sense, the chief voice and advocate around the world of America. The Secretary of State is in a sense our representative to the world, embodying and promoting, hopefully, the best in America to billions of people around the globe, proving to the world yet again that America is exceptional, that we are the greatest country in the history of the world, and that we have a respect for the rule of law, for human dignity and rights for all, including the right to live in a safe and free environment.

Past Secretaries of State have changed history, averted and navigated war, brokered peace, championed human rights, and fought to make the world a better place. In this time of immense uncertainty, we must demand nothing less of our next Secretary of State than that he be a great reflection and representative of the United States to the world.

The likes of Hillary Clinton, Colin Powell, Madeleine Albright, George Marshall, and Charles Evan Hughes have all held this position. To join these titans or even to aspire to their position is no small challenge. We need a candidate who will continue to embody what is right even in the face of resistance from adversaries and foes who do not admire and, in fact, seek to do harm to our way of life.

As ExxonMobil's CEO, the President's nominee, Rex Tillerson, has worked hard and successfully for his corporation. In fact, he has put that corporation's interests ahead of America's interests. That may have been his job, and I understand that was his job description, but doing that job well does not qualify him to be our Nation's chief diplomat and to assume the mantle of defending our national interests.

Having worked for four decades for this oil giant, without any government experience, I am unconvinced that Mr. Tillerson has shown he is able to re-

verse this oil interest mindset and put America's needs before his former employer. I do not have faith that he can rise to the paramount challenge of representing us on the world stage.

I share my colleagues' concerns. We have heard numerous of our colleagues express the same view—that his oil interests will harm the progress we have made to protect the environment and slow the impact of climate change. I say that reluctantly because I hope I am wrong. He is likely to be confirmed, but I hope my colleagues think hard and long and join me in opposing Rex Tillerson.

I am also hopeful that a number of his other stances, such as enforcing sanctions that hold our adversaries accountable—notably, Russia and Iran—will change as well. These stances have been troubling. I have little confidence that Mr. Tillerson will vigorously enforce these sanctions and even less confidence that he will guide President Trump to provide the crucial advice our demonstrably rash and ill-advised President needs.

I want to point particularly to some of the tactics ExxonMobil used in its litigation against legal challenges that were brought based on climate change information that allegedly was concealed by ExxonMobil. These tactics are deeply troubling, and I hope that maybe the toughness of ExxonMobil in those tactics will be replicated in the toughness that is brought to bear in enforcing the sanctions against Iran and Russia because he has shown a troublesome trend of opposing sanctions that have held Iran accountable—sanctions that pushed Iran to the table in negotiating the Iran nuclear agreement, which has made our world a safer place.

Across decades and administrations, the Senate reached an overwhelmingly bipartisan consensus that the Iran regime should be aggressively sanctioned for its global missile program, state sponsorship of terrorism, and gross human rights violations. ExxonMobil directly and together with other global oil companies and through the financing of third-party advocacy organizations has persistently tried to stop Congress from passing sanctions legislation.

ExxonMobil has been a board member of USA Engage since its founding in 1997 and from 2003 to 2007 held the chairmanship of that organization. For two decades it has actively lobbied Congress to oppose Iran-related sanctions bills, including last year for at least four such pieces of legislation.

ExxonMobil has worked to prevent the authorization and extension of the Iran sanctions act, which I am proud to say was renewed for another 10 years by Congress, becoming law just a few weeks ago, and I was proud to support it. Yet, during Mr. Tillerson's hearing, he denied that ExxonMobil ever lobbied against Iran's sanctions, in the face of facts to the contrary. As Ronald Reagan said, "Facts are stubborn things."

Foreign policy experts and military leadership have explicitly identified Russia as a growing threat and a violator of international law. Many of us in this body—in fact, I would say the majority—have recognized that fact. Yet Mr. Tillerson does not seem to treat Russia with the same gravity.

We need a Secretary of State who is going to work with our NATO allies and stand up for us and not give Putin a pass. We are all aware of Mr. Tillerson's inappropriate stance toward relations with a country responsible for assaults on world order through cyber attacks, illegal land grabs, and war crimes. We are the victims of a cyber attack by Russia, an act of cyber war. The Secretary of State must be somebody who regards that kind of attack as intolerable and unacceptable.

Mr. Tillerson's affinity for Russia is alarming because he adds to the growing list of Putin admirers in this administration, and that list unfortunately includes the President himself and National Security Advisor Michael Flynn.

Mr. Tillerson's opposition to sanctions imposed on Russia for its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 was not the result of national security concerns but, rather, because ExxonMobil stood to make millions, even billions of dollars from the business deal that corporation had recently made with Russia to develop its oil and gas interests. What is good for ExxonMobil is not necessarily good for the United States of America. These sanctions were put in place because Russia's invasion of Ukraine was unacceptable and now has led to at least 10,000 deaths, 20,000 wounded, and 2 million people displaced.

These are hard numbers and hard facts—the result of Russian aggression that must be countered.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I have fought to include and pass the NDAA's robust funding for Ukrainian assistance. I am proud to say that this initiative was successful. I also successfully urged a provision that terminated U.S. contracts with the Russian arms export agency.

Mr. Tillerson made it clear during his nomination hearing that his stance was unchanged. He could not admit that Vladimir Putin is a war criminal, despite these deaths and the torture involved in this aggression and other similar acts, or to say that the sanctions against Putin's Russia are necessary and appropriate. His views are inconsistent with the interests of the United States of America.

Given his troubling trend of dodging questions during his testimony, I cannot confidently say that he will follow the clear direction of Congress concerning sanctions policy. I will say bluntly and frankly to my colleagues that my particular concern is that sanctions laws contain waivers. Those waivers are provided to the President for the rare requirement that such sanctions may be waived when it is in

the national interest or for national security. This exception must be used exceedingly sparingly and judiciously. Sanctions without enforcement are worse than no sanctions at all. They are meaningless, and they raise false expectations. My fear is that under Mr. Tillerson, if he is advising President Trump, those exemptions and exceptions will swallow the rule.

Talking about rules, if confirmed, Mr. Tillerson will be responsible for executing President Trump's extremely misguided policy expanding the global gag rule, which prevents foreign aid from being provided to global health programs that discuss or provide abortion services. The result will be to obstruct programs that cover everything from HIV prevention to maternal and child care and epidemic disease responses, putting lives at risk. This is just the opposite of what we ought to be doing. It makes the world less safe, as does this weekend's Executive order that bans refugees and Muslims. We need someone willing and able to voice resistance and opposition to policies that flagrantly fly in the face of everything we value—our American values. We need a Secretary of State ready to stand up for the most vulnerable people and speak truth to power, even when that power is the President of the United States. The fact is, sadly, that Mr. Tillerson has never taken strong stances on these issues, leaving us guessing as to what he will do when and if he is in office.

I cannot support anyone to be Secretary of State who fails to condemn the suspension of our Refugee Resettlement Program directly under his purview. When we target refugees, we target people who are victims of the same oppressors and tyrants and murderers that we call enemies. Refugees are not our enemies. Many are fleeing the murderous Syrian regime and ISIL, which are our enemies. We are at war with ISIL, and we must win that war. We are disadvantaged by a policy that excludes refugees on the basis of religion, because we alienate our allies with the sources of intelligence and troops on the ground, and we lead to the misimpression—and it is a misimpression—that we are at war against Islam or our Muslim neighbors when, in fact, our enemy is violent extremists.

These refugees and immigrants see America as a beacon of hope, but they are now receiving the message that, whoever they are and however strong their claim to come here is, their religion will bar them, their religion denies them the right to come to this country, their religion will ban them.

Mr. Tillerson has never denounced this strategy when it does so much to damage our international credibility, our values at home, and our Constitution. Four judges have stayed the President's Executive orders. My respectful opinion is that the President's orders are, in fact, illegal.

The question is this: Will he defend career diplomats who have spoken out

against these policies? Will he take a stand himself against them? Will he stand up for American values?

One story in particular struck me because it involves my own State of Connecticut. Last Saturday, a Syrian refugee who settled in Milford, CT, 2 years ago, Fadi Kassir, anxiously awaited the arrival of his wife and two daughters, ages 5 and 8. He has not seen them since resettling in this country. His family was turned away before they could board a flight to the United States. They were told they were not going to be allowed to enter this country following the President's refugee ban. Despite having been granted refugee status—asylum—three days before the refugee ban, they would no longer be united with Mr. Kassir in the United States.

I am working—and I hope the Secretary of Homeland Security may be listening, if not at this moment then at some point in the future, to my entreaty that he do the right thing, that he make their entry possible. They have gone through all of the necessary screenings, submitted all of the necessary forms. Yet, under the President's Executive action, they are denied refuge in the United States based only on their nationality and their religion.

Mr. Kassir's family is now back in Jordan without luggage, without clothes, and without the new home they were so close to having. My office has offered assistance to Mr. Kassir's lawyers, and we are working to help in any way we can.

The United States—Connecticut in particular—has a proud moral tradition and heritage of aiding refugees who need our help when their own homelands are in turmoil. President Trump's egregious acts contravene our values, contradict our Constitution, and should be rescinded immediately.

Mr. Tillerson, join me in urging President Trump to rip up this order. It is the only solution.

I am not confident, until I hear him say so, that he is ready to be the leader we need in the Department of State to ensure that America's values of acceptance and assistance hold strong in an administration that directly challenges these most cherished traditions and values.

Our Secretary of State must be clear-eyed about threats facing our Nation, both from adversaries abroad and others who would do us harm inside our borders. I regretfully conclude that Mr. Tillerson has failed to demonstrate that ability to do so, and I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing his nomination.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHATZ. 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. SCHATZ. Mr. President, American history has been shaped by U.S. Secretaries of State. Secretary Dean Acheson guided the United States through the Cold War. Secretary Madeleine Albright proved that diplomacy does not depend on gender and that protecting refugees and human rights are core American principles. Secretary Henry Kissinger laid the groundwork for peace between Egypt and Israel. And forgive me for using such a recent example, but Secretary John Kerry helped to bring the international community together to tackle climate change.

As our Nation's top diplomat, the Secretary of State is the highest ranking cabinet member and the President's top adviser on U.S. foreign policy.

The Secretary balances relationships with some 180 countries and is responsible for tens of thousands of Americans working at more than 250 posts around the world.

In other words, it takes a remarkable knowledge base and skill set to be Secretary of State, particularly as the United States takes on a complex and complicated set of issues. At the top of the list is climate change. The global changes we have seen in the climate are affecting almost every part of the world, from droughts in Sub-Saharan Africa to rising sea levels in parts of Asia.

We have also not seen this level of refugees and migrants since after World War II. The Rohingyas, Syrians, Afghans, Guatemalans, and many others are fleeing war, violence, persecution, and instability. Globalization and technology have disrupted economies, leaving governments, companies, and workers trying to figure out how to keep up with the times without being left behind. Terrorism and violent extremism haunt parts of the globe, from the Middle East to Europe, and to our own borders.

The Secretary of State has to take on all of these challenges and do it in a way that advances U.S. interests and values. After reviewing his record and his testimony before the Senate, I am not satisfied that Rex Tillerson is the right person to lead the State Department. On each of these criteria—views, knowledge base, and skills—I have concerns about his nomination at this point in the process.

First, I am not satisfied with Mr. Tillerson's views. There has been a clear consensus among both parties on the foundation of U.S. foreign policy. Throughout the confirmation process, however, Mr. Tillerson indicated that his views did not necessarily align with that consensus. During discussions on international human rights, the hearing record shows that Mr. Tillerson was vague about oppressive governments, extrajudicial killings, and the bombing of hospitals. He demurred when given the opportunity to rule out

a Muslim registry, a concept that is anathema to American values, and yet this administration is dangerously close to implementing one.

Perhaps most concerning were Mr. Tillerson's views on Russia. I don't need to be the umpteenth person to list the many, many concerns we have about a country that is not America's ally. For decades, there has been bipartisan consensus about U.S. relations with Russia, and I am uncomfortable with confirming a Secretary of State who does not share that bipartisan view.

Secondly, I am not satisfied that Mr. Tillerson has the knowledge base to lead U.S. diplomacy. His vision for the State Department seemed to confuse the roles of the Department of State and the Department of Defense. During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Tillerson responded to a question on the South China Sea, but his answer focused on military solutions instead of the long list of diplomatic options which we should first explore.

That is not to say a Secretary of State can't recommend military solutions. There is certainly a long history of the State Department doing just that, but it should always be as a last resort. It always comes after a long pursuit of peace through diplomacy.

Finally, I am not satisfied that Mr. Tillerson will be able to translate the considerable skills he has from ExxonMobil to the State Department. His long career at Exxon is certainly impressive, but it is the only international job on his resume, and let's be clear, the company's record does not at all align with U.S. foreign policy, from accusations related to human rights abuses to Exxon's business operations in countries that are not friendly to the United States. I am not arguing that this makes Mr. Tillerson a bad person. As the CEO of a big company, he had his own imperatives and his own obligations, and I understand and respect that. But it is not enough to say that I used to care only about ExxonMobil's interests, but now I only care about the U.S. interests.

The next leader of the State Department will have to argue for our values and our priorities with friends and adversaries alike. He or she will need to balance business interests with national security and with American values. I approach this nomination process with an open mind, but Mr. Tillerson's confirmation hearing left me with too many doubts about his views, his knowledge set, and his abilities. I will be voting no on his nomination.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PETERS. 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. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise to express my opposition to the nomination of Rex Tillerson as Secretary of State. The position of Secretary of State was one of the original four Cabinet positions created by President George Washington.

Even after we declared, fought for, and won our independence as a new country, our Founders knew that this world is interconnected. They understood that what we needed was to engage with other countries and to manage our affairs all across the world.

Our first Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson, had previously been our Minister to France, our closest ally at the time of our Nation's founding.

Today, the role of Secretary of State is as important as ever. We need a Secretary who will reassure our allies, project strength and competence around the world, and push back against the President's worst impulses.

Having reviewed his qualifications and testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I am unfortunately convinced that Mr. Tillerson is not the right person to lead the State Department and to represent the United States abroad.

Mr. Tillerson has spent decades at ExxonMobil, where he rose through the ranks from an engineer to chairman and CEO. We should value hard work and success in the private sector, but we should also ask what the President's nominees were working toward. Mr. Tillerson's success at Exxon in large part can be attributed to deals he struck and connections he made with Russian plutocrats and government officials, including Vladimir Putin.

Over the years, Mr. Tillerson's views toward Vladimir Putin have been, in a word, flexible. Mr. Tillerson has always put Exxon first, cozying up to Putin's authoritarian regime when it suited his own business interests.

In 2008, he spoke out against the Russian Government's disrespect for the rule of law and its judicial system, but in 2011, after reaching a \$500 billion deal with the Russian state-owned oil company, he changed his views.

Under Vladimir Putin, the Russian Government silences dissent. They murder political rivals and journalists. Many of Putin's political opponents have been poisoned or shot. Since 2000, at least 34 journalists have been murdered in Russia, many by government or military officials.

Mr. Tillerson was awarded Russia's Order of Friendship by Putin in 2012—one of the highest honors Russia conveys to foreigners.

When Congress was working in a bipartisan manner to enact sanctions on Russia for its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, ExxonMobil was lobbying against the bill under the leadership of Mr. Tillerson.

During his confirmation hearing, his answers demonstrated either a lack of understanding or a willful ignorance of the destabilizing role Russia plays around the world.

Last year I traveled to Ukraine and Estonia, countries that are on the frontline of Russian aggression. They are genuinely concerned about President Trump's desire to embrace Russia. I heard firsthand how important the support and presence of the United States is to our allies in the Baltics.

In recent years, Russia's belligerence has only grown. Russia has conducted a cyber attack against Estonia, seized territory in Georgia, kidnapped an Estonian border guard, and illegally annexed Crimea. Russian military patrols have approached NATO member territory and have come recklessly close to U.S. military vessels. These irresponsible actions can have severe, dangerous consequences.

What should be most disturbing to any American is that last year Russia interfered with our election to undermine public faith in our democratic process. The intelligence community reported that Vladimir Putin himself ordered the interference—a significant escalation of Russian attempts to sow chaos in the West.

I recognize the President's right to choose his appointments to the Cabinet, but, as the Senate provides its advice and consent, there are still too many unanswered questions for me to support this nomination. We still have not seen President Trump's tax returns, breaking a 40-year tradition adhered to by nominees of both parties. This lack of transparency means that we don't know about the Trump family's possible past and current business ties to Russia. What message do we send to our allies if the Secretary of State and potentially even the President have a history of significant business dealings with a corrupt regime? How will this impact our moral authority as a country to take action against corruption worldwide?

The Secretary of State is the U.S. Ambassador to the world. It is essential that the Secretary is someone who can provide unquestioned leadership and represent American values. There must be no question that the Secretary of State is acting in the best interest of the United States and is willing to take strong action to advance our interests. He must put the American people first and not his former shareholders and friends in the Exxon boardroom.

I am concerned that Mr. Tillerson will prematurely lift the sanctions that have been put in place against Russia. Sanctions are not meant to be permanent, but they should never be removed until they have achieved their purpose.

When our Secretary of State looks at a map of the Baltic region, we need a statesman who sees allies that contribute to NATO, not a new opportunity for offshore drilling.

The Senate must ensure that we are a moderating voice and are approving moderating voices in the Trump administration.

I supported the nominations of Secretary Mattis to lead the Department

of Defense, Secretary Kelly to lead the Department of Homeland Security, and Ambassador Haley to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, and I supported these individuals because I believe they will serve as a positive influence against the worst instincts and erratic tendencies of President Trump and his political advisers.

America must stand by its allies and serve as a shining example of democracy. I cannot support a Secretary of State nominee if there is any doubt as to whether they will be a strong, independent voice within the Trump administration. The events of the past week have made the need for such leadership abundantly clear. That is why I will vote against the nomination of Rex Tillerson for Secretary of State, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the Secretary of State nominee, as well as President Trump's recent Executive order on refugees. I believe we need a Secretary of State who will clearly stand up to Russian aggression. I am concerned about the nominee's past statements and his relationship with Russia, and I am not going to be voting for him. If he is confirmed, I hope we can work with him. Some of his newer statements have been positive on taking that on, as well as some of the many issues confronting our world.

The reason I am so focused on Russia is, first of all, we have a significant Ukrainian population in Minnesota. We are very proud of them. I was recently in Ukraine, Georgia, as well as Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia with Senators MCCAIN and GRAHAM. I saw firsthand the meaning of Russian aggression on a daily basis. In these countries, the cyber attack is not a new movie. They have seen it many times before. It is a rerun. In Estonia, in 2007, they had the audacity to move a bronze statue of a Russian fighter from a town square where there had been protests to a cemetery. What did they get for that? They got their Internet service shut down. That is what they do. In Lithuania, they decided something you could imagine happening in our own country. On the 25th anniversary of the celebration of the independence of their country, they invited, as an act of solidarity, the members of the Ukrainian Parliament—who are in exile in Kiev from Crimea, which has been illegally annexed by Russia. They invited them to meet with them and celebrate in Lithuania. What happened to them; again, cyber attacks on members of the Parliament.

This is not just about one political candidate. We saw in the last election in the United States—where now 17 intelligence agencies have collectively said there was an infringement—that there was an attempt to influence our elections in America. It is not just about one candidate. It is not just about one political party, as Senator RUBIO so eloquently noted. It is not even just about one country. It is an assault on democracies across the world.

I think we need to take this very seriously, not just from an intelligence standpoint but also from a foreign relations standpoint. That is why I introduced the bill, with Senators FEINSTEIN, CARDIN, LEAHY, and CARPER, to create an independent and nonpartisan commission to uncover all the facts. It is also why we have an expanded sanctions bill that is bipartisan, led by Senators MCCAIN and CARDIN.

What we do matters. I think you see that, not only with regard to our relations with those countries in the Baltics but also with what we have seen in just the past few days because of this Executive order. I hope that having a Secretary of State in place would help, as well as more involvement from other agencies so something like this will never happen again.

TRAVEL BAN

As a former prosecutor, I have long advocated for thorough vetting. I have supported strong national security measures. I believe the No. 1 purpose of government is to keep people safe, but I don't believe that is what this Executive order did. In fact, it created chaos. I am on the bill to reverse and rescind this order. I know they have taken some steps to respond to all of the problems we have seen in every State in this Nation, but what really happened was—with the stroke of a pen—the administration excluded entire populations from seeking refuge.

I do think it is a bit forgotten that it is not just the seven or so countries that were identified by the administration. The refugee program has been stopped all over the world, and on Sunday I met with, along with Senator FRANKEN, a number of our refugee populations. To give you some background, we have the biggest population of Somalis in the Nation in Minnesota. We are proud of our Somali population. We have the second biggest Hmong population. We have the biggest Liberian population. We have the biggest Oromo population. We have a number of people from Burma. These are all legal workers. They come over as refugees. They are legal when they come over. Many of them get green cards. Many of them go on to become citizens. We have people who are on work visas, people who are on student visas.

The faces I saw and the people I met, these were their stories: an engineer from 3M who doesn't think he can go back to visit his father; a former marine from one of the affected countries who doesn't believe his brother can