

hard to compete against.” Note that Electrolux says that it gives foreign manufacturers an advantage. Electrolux buys all of the carbon steel it uses in its Tennessee plants from American steel mills. Let me say that again. Electrolux, which employees 1,000 people in Tennessee making home appliances, buys all of the carbon steel it uses in Tennessee plants from American steel mills. Yet it has put its expansion on hold because it believes the tariff will make it difficult for Tennessee plants to compete with plants overseas. Why? Because the new tariff is expected to cause American steel mills to raise their prices to match the newer, higher price of imported steel. The result of the tariff, therefore, will be higher costs for Electrolux and fewer jobs in Springfield, TN, making home appliances with 100 percent American steel. Instead, there will be more jobs overseas making home appliances with 100 percent foreign steel.

The new U.S. tariffs on imported steel will raise the price of all steel sold in our country, so appliance manufacturers with plants in the United States will have a hard time competing with plants outside of our country.

We should learn the lesson from 2002 when President Bush imposed similar tariffs—again, a good goal, a well-intentioned President, but it backfired. According to one widely cited independent study, the tariffs raised consumer prices and “[m]ore American workers lost their jobs in 2002 to higher steel prices than the total number employed by the U.S. steel industry itself.” President Bush’s tariffs also led to retaliation, as other countries threatened to impose new tariffs on American exports, which would have cost even more U.S. jobs.

On Friday, the Wall Street Journal editorial board reminded readers: “Steel using industries in the U.S. employ some 6.5 million Americans, while steel makers employ about 140,000. Transportation industries, including aircraft and autos, account for about 40% of domestic steel consumption, followed by packaging with 20% and building construction with 15%. All will have to pay higher prices, making them less competitive globally and in the U.S.”

That was the Wall Street Journal.

The backlash to the 2002 tariffs was so strong that President Bush terminated them early.

I want to give President Trump credit for listening. He invited a number of us who disagree with his advisers on trade to the White House. He has listened carefully. So far, we haven’t persuaded him. I hope we still can. I thank him for listening. I hope he will continue to listen.

It is unusual to have a lesson in American history so much like the action he is proposing to take that was not good for the country no matter how well-intentioned the President was or how good an idea it seemed.

Since history can often serve as a guide, I refer my colleagues to two ad-

resses I delivered on the U.S. Senate floor on September 2, 2003, and November 11, 2003, summarizing the disastrous effect President Bush’s proposed steel tariffs had on U.S. jobs.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of the Wall Street Journal’s March 2 editorial on tariffs.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Wall Street Journal, Updated March 1, 2018]

TRUMP’S TARIFF FOLLY
(By the Editorial Board)

Donald Trump made the biggest policy blunder of his Presidency Thursday by announcing that next week he’ll impose tariffs of 25% on imported steel and 10% on aluminum. This tax increase will punish American workers, invite retaliation that will harm U.S. exports, divide his political coalition at home, anger allies abroad, and undermine his tax and regulatory reforms. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.7% on the news, as investors absorbed the self-inflicted folly.

Mr. Trump has spent a year trying to lift the economy from its Obama doldrums, with considerable success. Annual GDP growth has averaged 3% in the past nine months if you adjust for temporary factors, and on Tuesday the ISM manufacturing index for February came in at a gaudy 60.8. American factories are humming, and consumer and business confidence are soaring.

Apparently Mr. Trump can’t stand all this winning. His tariffs will benefit a handful of companies, at least for a while, but they will harm many more. “We have with us the biggest steel companies in the United States. They used to be a lot bigger, but they’re going to be a lot bigger again,” Mr. Trump declared in a meeting Thursday at the White House with steel and aluminum executives.

No, they won’t. The immediate impact will be to make the U.S. an island of high-priced steel and aluminum. The U.S. companies will raise their prices to nearly match the tariffs while snatching some market share. The additional profits will flow to executives in higher bonuses and shareholders, at least until the higher prices hurt their steel- and aluminum-using customers. Then U.S. steel and aluminum makers will be hurt as well.

Mr. Trump seems not to understand that steel-using industries in the U.S. employ some 6.5 million Americans, while steel makers employ about 140,000. Transportation industries, including aircraft and autos, account for about 40% of domestic steel consumption, followed by packaging with 20% and building construction with 15%. All will have to pay higher prices, making them less competitive globally and in the U.S.

Instead of importing steel to make goods in America, many companies will simply import the finished product made from cheaper steel or aluminum abroad. Mr. Trump fancies himself the savior of the U.S. auto industry, but he might note that Ford Motor shares fell 3% Thursday and GM’s fell 4%. U.S. Steel gained 5.8%. Mr. Trump has handed a giant gift to foreign car makers, which will now have a cost advantage over Detroit. How do you think that will play in Michigan in 2020? The National Retail Federation called the tariffs a “tax on American families,” who will pay higher prices for canned goods and even beer in aluminum cans. Another name for this is the Trump voter tax.

The economic damage will quickly compound because other countries can and will retaliate against U.S. exports. Not steel, but

against farm goods, Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Cummins engines, John Deere tractors, and much more. Foreign countries are canny enough to know how to impose maximum political pain on Republican Senators and Congressmen in an election year by targeting exports from their states and districts. Has anyone at the White House political shop thought this through?

Then there’s the diplomatic damage, made worse by Mr. Trump’s use of Section 232 to claim a threat to national security. In the process Mr. Trump is declaring a unilateral exception to U.S. trade agreements that other countries won’t forget and will surely emulate.

The national security threat from foreign steel is preposterous because China supplies only 2.2% of U.S. imports and Russia 8.7%. But the tariffs will whack that menace to world peace known as Canada, which supplies 16%. South Korea, which Mr. Trump needs for his strategy against North Korea, supplies 10%, Brazil 13% and Mexico 9%.

Oh, and Canada buys more American steel than any other country, accounting for 50% of U.S. steel exports. Mr. Trump is punishing our most important trading partner in the middle of a NAFTA renegotiation that he claims will result in a much better deal. Instead he is taking a machete to America’s trade credibility. Why should Canada believe a word he says?

Mr. Trump announced his intentions Thursday, so there’s still time to reconsider. GOP Senators Orrin Hatch (Utah) and Ben Sasse (Nebraska) spoke up loudly against the tariffs, but a larger business and labor chorus is required. Mr. Trump is a bona fide protectionist so he won’t be dissuaded by arguments about comparative advantage. But perhaps he will heed the message from the falling stock market, and from the harm he will do to the economy, his voters, and his Presidency.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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

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

SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today as Syria is about to enter its eighth year of conflict. We have witnessed 7 years of displacement and violence, 7 years of war crimes, and 7 years of Bashar al-Assad’s illegitimate grasp on power. To say that it is past time for Assad to go or that it is past time for the conflict to be resolved dramatically underestimates the horrible suffering and destruction the people of Syria have experienced. In these 7 years, almost 500,000 Syrians have been killed and more than 12 million have been displaced from their homes.

This conflict has disproportionately affected children, as all conflicts do. According to Save the Children, inside Syria, 7.5 million children have lived their whole lives knowing nothing but war. Emotional and psychological stress has manifested itself physically; Syrian children now face an increase in heart disease, diabetes, and depression. These children are growing up in refugee camps, with no end in sight. This means the loss of their childhood and

of educational opportunities. I don't exaggerate when I say that because of this war, an entire generation of Syrians will be both displaced and disaffected in an already volatile region. Ignoring these children ensures decades of instability to come.

In Eastern Ghouta this past week, we saw the most recent example of the brutality of the Assad regime, aided and abetted by Russia and Iran. While only just now making headlines, Eastern Ghouta has been held under siege by the Syrian Government since 2013. This neighborhood, which had supposedly been designated as a deescalation zone, has been bombarded by Syrian Government forces armed with Russian weapons. In just a few days, 500 civilians have been killed, and that number is growing.

Years after the international community reached a consensus that Assad had lost his legitimacy as the leader of Syria, he not only remains in power but is more secure than ever. The United States has not only failed to exert moral leadership in the face of Syrian suffering but has also failed to show strategic leadership in the face of a tangible threat to U.S. national security.

I have long called on both the Obama and Trump administrations, warning that U.S. interests were not being represented in Syrian negotiations, but this has never been more clearly illustrated than in November of this past year, November of 2017, when a picture circulated of Presidents Ruhani, Putin, and Erdogan shaking hands in Russia after a round of negotiations to determine a potential resolution of the Syrian conflict.

I have to ask, is it now U.S. policy to let these three dictate policy in the Middle East—Ruhani, Putin, and Erdogan? The United States was not there, nor were our European allies. The United States is failing our own interests by ceding leadership in Syria to Iran and Russia, whose national security interests often directly contradict our own.

What do these bullying regimes want from Syria?

Let's start with Iran. Iran sees Syria as an investment in its political infrastructure and its campaign for regional hegemony. It is their "land bridge" from Tehran to Beirut, a weapons pipeline, a training camp for Hezbollah. It is a practice ground for a future war with Israel.

What about the Russians? The Russian Government, led by Mr. Putin, has made clear that they believe all Syrian territory must return to the Assad regime and to the Assad regime's control before political reforms can be considered. Putin seeks a solution that shows that he is the arbiter of events in the Middle East. Lately, foreign leaders—including Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel, President Ruhani, and King Salman of Saudi Arabia—fly to Moscow instead of Washington. They see a Russia that seeks to write the rules of

international order and an America that sits back, too enmeshed in our own political strife to lead.

This is not the America that I know and that most Americans know. The America I know does not believe that where you are born should dictate where you live or die or if you spend your childhood in a refugee camp. The America I know does not stand by while enemy nations threaten to expand their spheres of influence. The America I know sees the complexity of our own foreign involvements, understanding, for instance, that ISIS cannot be fully defeated without considering the context of the Syrian civil war. The America I know supports its allies, like Israel, that share a chaotic border with a nation at war with itself.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy spoke at the Fort Worth, TX, Chamber of Commerce on the challenges posed by the Soviet regime.

He said:

This country, which desires only to be free, which desires to be secure, which desired to live at peace for 18 years under three different administrations, has borne more than its share of the burden, has stood watch for more than its number of years. I don't think we are fatigued or tired. We would like to live as we once lived. But history will not permit it. . . . The balance of power is still on the side of freedom. We are still the keystone in the arch of freedom, and I think we will continue to do as we have done in our past, our duty.

So said President Kennedy. He spoke to the paradox of our country then and now, what we continue to face. If we are to remain the keystone in the arch of freedom, we cannot become fatigued by the responsibility to fight tyranny.

These are the very issues that should receive public debate as part of the congressional consideration of a new authorization for the use of military force, known by the acronym AUMF. We undermine our own credibility when we continue to send our men and women into conflicts that Congress has not authorized. Secretary Tillerson, our Secretary of State, has indicated that he sees a need for a long-term U.S. military presence in Syria; yet many of us believe that there is no purely military solution to this conflict. Where is the strategy? we ask. I would like to see the administration put forward a plan that encompasses all components of this conflict—military, political, and humanitarian.

When we ask our men and women in uniform to put their lives on the line to protect our homeland and fight terrorism, we need to be willing to back them up by doing our jobs here in Washington. Just consider Pennsylvania. Pennsylvanians have made a substantial sacrifice in the past 17 years of war as 288 of our brave servicemembers have been killed in action in those 17 years and as almost 2,000 have been wounded in action in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We owe it to these men and women to have a robust, bipartisan debate about this strategy and a vote on an AUMF.

We should also vote on legislation to cut off financing for ISIS or any other terrorist organization in the world. I have a bipartisan bill, the Stop Terrorists Operational Resources and Money Act, the so-called STORM Act, with Senator ISAKSON. I have a bill, as well, with Senator RUBIO, the Preventing Destabilization of Iraq and Syria Act, to promote humanitarian aid and sanction the Russian and Iranian actors who are destabilizing this region—all of the components of a comprehensive strategy.

Let's have a serious debate on this critical national security issue. We are not always faced with situations in which our moral obligation and our strategic priorities lead to the same conclusion, but this is one of those rare moments.

May it be said of us years from now, just as President Kennedy said, that we do our duty to continue to be the keystone in the arch of freedom, including helping the Syrian people, especially her children, be free of Assad's brutality and bombing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination, Executive Calendar No. 397.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Jeffrey Gerrish, of Maryland, to be a Deputy United States Trade Representative (Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Industrial Competitiveness), with the rank of Ambassador.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gerrish nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.