

months on accommodating my colleagues' concerns about the bill. In certain ways, we pretty much accommodated every request for an amendment and every request for fixing the bill. So I really thought we were going to get to the point where we had way more than 60 Senators to pass this bill for the men and women of the Coast Guard, to make our waterway economic opportunities more efficient, and to put more maritime workers to work, but at the end of the day, we couldn't get to that magic number of 60, which is so critical here in the Senate. It is disappointing to say that politics got in the way. There were some people who had previously committed to make sure this got over the goal line who weren't there at the end. But we will keep working on it. It is too important for my State and too important for the country to leave the men and women of the Coast Guard and so many other important issues that were taken up in that bill not completed. That is what we call the legislative calendar—that is legislation on the Senate floor we are trying to move, and we will keep working in a bipartisan way there.

NOMINATION OF MIKE POMPEO

Now, Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit about an issue as it relates to the Executive Calendar. What do I mean when I am talking about the Executive Calendar? Well, in the Senate, under the U.S. Constitution, we are in the personnel business in addition to being in the legislative business. Under the Constitution, we have a role—the advice and consent power of the Senate to confirm the nominees who run the government. That comes from the executive branch. The White House—the President puts forward nominations, and we hold hearings and we confirm them.

I have been speaking on the floor a lot about this lately because, by any historical measure, unfortunately the Senate has slowed down, delayed, and obstructed the confirmation of individuals from the Trump administration whom we are trying to get confirmed to serve in the government. That is also sad. That is also disappointing. The statistics are very obvious.

A lot of us have tried to get the press who usually sits up there in the Gallery to write about this. They don't seem to care, but they should care. The American people should care.

Whether or not you voted for this President, once somebody wins an election and they start putting people forward—good Americans—to serve in the government, what we should be doing here is holding hearings, seeing if they are qualified, and then voting on whether to confirm them. Unfortunately, what is happening—and it is all out there—by any historical measure, my colleagues on the other side have filibustered and obstructed this administration's nominees to serve their country at a higher rate than has ever happened in U.S. history.

I have come down here and talked about this a lot. I keep coming down to ask the Senate minority leader and some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Why are you doing this? Why are you doing this?

I will give just one example. In the first not even 18 months of the Trump administration, the filibuster—that is a procedure used here in the Senate that could require much extended debate—the filibuster has been used more in the first 18 months than it was in the previous four administrations combined.

Why? I have been asking the question, why are you doing this? They don't really have an answer. I haven't heard anyone explain it. I know part of their base is very upset about the election a year and a half ago, but it is time to govern now. We have to get people in place and just vote on them. If you don't like them, if you don't think they are qualified, vote no. But time and again, we have qualified people who are being held up for 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 months for no reason, and it just doesn't make any sense.

The reason I am mentioning this is that there is now talk that it is not just in terms of a filibuster, but there is a possibility that my colleagues on the other side, as a total group, all of them, might come together and all vote against the President's most recent nominee to be the Secretary of State. That is the current CIA Director, Mike Pompeo.

I certainly didn't agree with everything the Obama administration did, but if you look at the history of the United States, particularly as it relates to nominees to head government agencies, to run national security agencies—the Department of Defense, the Secretary of State—these have typically been given a lot of leeway from the Senate.

For example, just in my relatively short career here—I sit on the Armed Services Committee—President Obama put forward a number of candidates to serve in the government at high levels in the Department of Defense to help run our national security. One was the Secretary of Defense. I didn't agree with Secretary Ash Carter on everything, but what I did was I sat down with him, had discussions with him, and we brought him up for a floor vote, and I voted to support him.

Let me give another example—Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning, put forward by President Obama. I didn't agree with everything Secretary Fanning was focused on. I sat down with him and had good discussions with him. He was actually being held up by some Republicans, and I worked to try to get him freed and confirmed.

They were well-qualified individuals.

Again, even if you don't agree with everything that an administration is doing in terms of foreign policy—there were elements of the Obama foreign policy that I supported, and there were a lot of elements that I didn't like.

When they put forward well-qualified individuals, I thought it was the duty of the Senate to sit down with them, meet with them, discuss your issues with them, and then vote on them.

Typically, in that realm, the individual had been supported, whether they are a Democrat or a Republican. Let me give a couple of examples. Secretary of State Tillerson had 55 Senators vote for him. Secretary of State John Kerry—94 Senators voted for him. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton—94 Senators voted for her. Condoleezza Rice—I worked for Condoleezza Rice for a number of years. She was a phenomenal Secretary of State. Eighty-five Senators voted for her. Secretary Colin Powell—voice vote. That means essentially 100 Senators voted for Secretary Powell. Secretary Madeleine Albright—I have gotten to know Madeleine Albright over a number of years. I have a deep respect for her, a Democrat. That vote was 99 to 0. Warren Christopher, another Democrat—a voice vote. That means 100, essentially. James Baker—another Secretary of State I have gotten to know over the years—99 to 0.

You see, this is deep history where, in this body, you are not going to agree with everything with regard to a President's foreign policy, but on these kinds of nominations, the history of this body and our Nation has typically been to be supportive.

Mike Pompeo is the current Director of the CIA. My friend from Tennessee, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, BOB CORKER, gave a speech earlier today. He talked about Mike Pompeo's qualifications. They are very impressive qualifications.

He went to West Point. By the way, he graduated No. 1 in his class at West Point. He went to Harvard Law School. By the way, he was the editor of the Harvard Law Review. This is a smart guy at the top institutions in America. He served in the Army. He served in Congress. He was very involved in foreign policy when he was a Member of Congress. He was a businessman and now is the Director of the CIA. Probably in terms of an individual in Washington, DC, who has insights on what is going on around the world in terms of our national security challenges, there is probably no one who has more insights on this than Mike Pompeo right now.

There is no doubt, by any measure, by any standard, historical standard, that when you look at our previous Secretaries of State, Mike Pompeo is well qualified. He is well qualified.

There is talk—and I hope it is only talk—that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are going to, en masse, vote against him. This would be getting into some dangerous territory for the United States as a country. As I mentioned, the tradition of this body is to vote to support the President's Secretary of State, particularly if he or she is a well-qualified individual.

The other side has been criticizing the Trump administration for not having enough nominees at, for example, the State Department. To be honest, I think some of that criticism is fair. We need to get out more nominees. The White House needs to get out more Ambassadors, more Assistant Secretaries, and more Under Secretaries. But, as I have mentioned to my colleagues a couple of times, they can't have it both ways. They can't have it both ways. What do I mean by that? You can't say to the administration "Hey, you need more Ambassadors. You need more Assistant Secretaries. You need a Secretary of State to run our foreign policy" and then, when those people are nominated by the President, delay, delay, delay. That is having it both ways, particularly if it is a candidate like Mike Pompeo, who is very well qualified.

Another criticism from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle is that there is just too much chaos in the administration right now, too much chaos in foreign policy, domestically and internationally. There is some truth to that, also, I am not going to deny that. But part of the reason there have been challenges at the State Department is that this body has been slow-rolling confirmation of the nominations.

Again, you can't say "We don't want the chaos" and then talk about voting along party lines to derail the nomination of Mike Pompeo, because that will actually continue and create the kind of chaos that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are railing against and say they don't want.

Chaos in the national security and foreign policy personnel world—that is not what we need. Nobody should be for that. Nobody should be for that.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a Washington Post editorial from just a couple of days ago that simply reads "Confirm Mike Pompeo."

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

[From The Washington Post, Apr. 12, 2018]

CONFIRM MIKE POMPEO

(By Editorial Board)

Mike Pompeo's confirmation hearing to become secretary of state arrived at a moment when the Trump administration is grappling with a chaotic confluence of actual and looming foreign crises—including some of its own making. President Trump is contemplating military strikes against Syria while also pushing for a U.S. pullout; he has committed to attempting to negotiate a nuclear deal with North Korea while threatening to repudiate the nuclear pact with Iran. He is waging a trade war against China and Japan while counting on their strategic cooperation against the regime of Kim Jong Un. And he is doing all this with a badly depleted national security apparatus: Dozens of senior positions are vacant at the State Department, and the newly arrived national security adviser, John Bolton, has started with a purge of senior staff at the White House.

Mr. Pompeo, who has a reputation as a hawk and who in Congress relentlessly pur-

sued groundless attacks against Hillary Clinton's State Department, did his best on Thursday to be reassuring. He stressed that he favored diplomatic solutions with Iran and North Korea; he played down the likely consequences of a decision by Mr. Trump to scrap the Iran deal next month. Importantly, he promised to defend the State Department's budget and to quickly seek to fill its many vacant positions, which would be a welcome departure from the odd management style of the departed Rex Tillerson.

As has frequently been the case during the past year, it was not always clear if Mr. Trump and his nominee are in agreement on major issues. Mr. Pompeo was tough on Russia, saying conflicts with it were caused by "Russia's bad behavior"; Mr. Trump tweeted Wednesday that "much of the bad blood with Russia is caused by the Fake & Corrupt Russia Investigation." Mr. Pompeo acknowledged that sanctions against Vladimir Putin's regime had been inadequate and promised to "reset . . . deterrence." But Mr. Trump tweeted that there was "no reason" for poor relations and suggested the United States should aid the Russian economy and "stop the arms race."

In this, Mr. Pompeo sounded much like his predecessor Mr. Tillerson, who often pushed Mr. Trump to be tougher on Mr. Putin and to resist reflexive impulses to pull U.S. forces out of Afghanistan and Syria. On human rights, as in support for the State Department, Mr. Pompeo sounded like an improvement, saying "we should defend American values every place we go," including to allies such as Egypt. Democracy promotion, he said, "is an important tool of foreign policy"—an idea that neither Mr. Tillerson nor Mr. Trump has supported. Though he reiterated his opposition to gay marriage, Mr. Pompeo said he would defend the rights of LGBT people both in the State Department and abroad.

Democrats who pressed Mr. Pompeo on his record, including his questionable statements about Muslims, have legitimate concerns. But rejecting or delaying his nomination, as Mr. Trump juggles multiple crises without adequate counsel, probably would make an already parlous situation worse. Mr. Pompeo should be deployed to Foggy Bottom in the hope that he will fulfill his promise to revive and reassert U.S. diplomacy.

Mr. SULLIVAN. The Washington Post has not necessarily been a strong supporter of the Trump administration, but right here in their editorial, they are saying that the Senate needs to confirm Mike Pompeo.

They make the point that I am trying to make here in my remarks, which is that rejecting or delaying Pompeo's nomination as Mr. Trump juggles multiple crises around the world without adequate counsel would probably make an already parlous situation worse.

"Mike Pompeo should be deployed to Foggy Bottom"—that is the State Department—"in the hope that he will fulfill his promise to revive and reassert U.S. diplomacy." That is from the Washington Post article, and I think it is wise counsel for everybody here—Republicans, Democrats, all of us.

Bipartisanship is important to move things along in the Senate, whether it is the Coast Guard bill or well-qualified nominees in the national security world, and it has certainly been a U.S. tradition with regard to the Secretary

of State that not only goes back decades but centuries.

I am hoping that my colleagues sit down and talk to Mike Pompeo if they have issues with him, and raise them, but let's get to the floor, and let's confirm him as the Secretary of State because the State Department needs a well-qualified individual to run that important agency, and so does our country.

I yield the floor.

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

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

THE NATIONAL DEBT

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a milestone that happened about 3 weeks ago.

We have a couple of interesting dates. April 15 just passed. We call it tax day. But it was another day. It was also the date we were supposed to complete the Senate budget for fiscal year 2019, which starts on October 1 of this year. Well, April 15 came, and the IRS deadline did indeed hit, but there was no budget completed. This is part of the dysfunction that people back home are so upset about. I want to talk about that today, but first I want to talk about the derivative of that broken process.

In my office, we have a debt clock. A few weeks ago, that debt clock passed a milestone: \$21 trillion. If that weren't bad enough, the commitments of this Federal Government over the last 50 years—actually, indeed, over the last 100 years—the commitments that have been made in the structural programs of this big government bureaucracy have committed us to some \$130 trillion over just the next 30 years.

That means that every household in America owes the equivalent of \$1 million per household. These are not theoretic numbers. These are mathematical realities derived from commitments made by a lot of our programs that we have passed over the last 100 years in this country.

In my opinion, we are well past the tipping point with this debt. Last week, the CBO came out with their new forecast for fiscal year 2018 and beyond. I want to talk about that today because there are some dramatic revelations in there. At \$21 trillion, we are already well past the tipping point of this crisis.

In my opinion, the CBO forecasts don't do a very good job of forecasting revenue. For example, they take very little account of foreign direct investment. They underestimate the impact of the change to the repatriation tax law we just made. I believe the revenue forecast is out of line, but I do agree with their forecast of expenses, and I