

in 1882, might have been worthy of a Senate debate and Senate vote—let's take them off the list now that there are 210 of them to be confirmed. Let's take them off the list. Of course, neither of those numbers are numbers from the debate, but that is what we did.

Then let's put a whole other group on the list so that if no one demands a vote, they can be confirmed if the committee recommends they should be confirmed without a vote. We tried to eliminate the process so that we could focus in on that rare occasion when there really should be a debate on the Senate floor about these nominees.

At the end of this week, I will look to see how many minutes were actually taken talking about these six nominees. It doesn't mean that the six nominees shouldn't be talked about. It doesn't mean, when you are going to put someone on a court of appeals for life, that the Congress shouldn't look carefully at them, but that has already happened. In some cases, it happened months ago, and in other cases, weeks ago. That has already happened. This is just a matter of whether we are going to vote or not. No votes will be persuaded by running the clock. No votes will be changed by running the clock. Of course, the power to put people on a Federal bench for life is an important power given in the Constitution to the President for the Supreme Court and such other courts as Congress may determine the country needs. It is not something to be taken lightly, but it is also not something to be abused.

It is not a process where the protection you might use 4 times in 2 years is suddenly used 90 times in 15 months. Something is wrong when that has happened to the process.

At the end of the day, the Senate is a place where the minority deserves to be heard. The Senate is a place where the rights of the minority—it makes it a unique legislative body, just like electing only one-third of the Senate every 2 years makes it a unique legislative body. It takes a long time to change the entire Senate. It has always been one of the purposes of the Senate is to be sure the minority had a chance to be heard, and the minority is always able to hold on to that right until the minority decides they are going to abuse that right.

When a right becomes an entitled, "Oh, it says we can have up to 30 hours of debate so we are going to insist on it every single time," that is when that right is in jeopardy. That is when you run the risk of losing that right.

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Also, today we are talking about a nomination in a committee that should look carefully at that. It is a committee I am on—the Intelligence Committee. It is the nomination of someone to run the CIA—the Central Intelligence Agency. It is critically important to the country. Actually, the President has nominated the most qualified person ever to be nominated

to that job in the history of the CIA. She is someone who has spent her entire 30-plus-year career in the CIA, someone who has had almost every job you could have in the CIA, someone who has been at the front ranks in the most dangerous countries working for the Central Intelligence Agency, and someone who currently serves not just as the Acting Director but has been serving as the Deputy Director. Nobody has ever been nominated with that capacity.

When people look at the hearing that was publicly held today, I think they are going to see an individual who is incredibly prepared. They are going to see someone who needs no on-the-job training, someone who is not only running the Agency now day-to-day but someone who knows more about the Agency—the Central Intelligence Agency—than anybody has ever known who has held that job.

When we confirm Gina Haspel, and I believe we will—I know we should—there will be no on-the-job training necessary. She will run the CIA; the CIA will not run her.

Now, if any Member of the Senate—even Members who have been on the Intelligence Committee for years—went to the CIA, there would be a great likelihood that, at least for a while, the CIA would run them; that people at the CIA would say: Well, here is something we have to do; here is something we used to do; here is a box that has always been checked before. It takes a certain amount of time to determine why that may have been necessary, but it will take her no time to determine what is necessary and what is not.

She is nominated by the President, but she has been briefing since her boss became the Secretary of State and part of the time while he was the Director of the CIA. General Hayden is one of—virtually every past Director of the CIA, Democratic and Republican appointees, has said she is someone who should be confirmed.

In a quote I particularly like, Gen. Mike Hayden said she was the person he would want in the room when the President was making the decision. She would be the person whom I think you and I would want to be there understanding the facts. Sometimes we don't know all the facts, but all the facts we should know, and if anybody knows them, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency should know them.

I said at the hearing this morning—this is a phrase I don't use very often, and I think it is overused, but if ever there is a moment when someone speaks "truth to power"—if that is the right way to describe the discussion—that could certainly be the moment when the Director of the CIA, with a 32- or 34-year career there, would say to the President of the United States: Mr. President, that doesn't take into account all of the facts. Let's be sure we understand everything we need to know before you make that decision. That is truth to power.

Hopefully, we will get to that nomination. That may even be a nomination that would justify a 20-hour floor debate. We can certainly give 20 hours or 30 hours to every Member of the Senate who wanted to come to the floor to talk about that nomination, and it may be close enough that if it changed three or four votes, it would make a difference in the outcome, but in all likelihood, no votes would be changed. Believe me, this would be a debate where the country should really know exactly what they are getting when they get someone who has dedicated themselves to the Central Intelligence Agency and the country like Gina Haspel has, but that is a very different moment than the one we are in right now. The one we are in right now takes time and doesn't change any result.

I would just encourage my colleagues, let's get to work. Let's stop hearing that we don't have time on the floor to get our job done, where every time you turn on C-SPAN, more often than not, you see the Senate in what is called a quorum call, which is a very slow calling of the roll of the Senate because there is nobody here to say anything because we are using up someone's insisted-on 30 hours of debate.

Let's get to the business of the country. Let's do what we are—this is the greatest country in the history of the world, with the greatest capacity to impact the world of any country in the world.

When you turn on C-SPAN and look at what is happening in the U.S. Senate, it shouldn't be a blank screen because we are waiting x number of hours for people to cast a vote, and they already know what that vote is going to be. Let's take the time we need to debate the nominations we need to debate. Let's quit wasting the time and using the excuse of, well, we need to have thoughtful consideration of this nomination that, by the way, no one is going to come to the floor to talk about.

Senator JOHNSON may have set a new standard here. Certainly, when I checked just a few days ago, we had a debate on a very controversial nominee. This was the NASA Administrator. I think it passed by one vote. It was pretty controversial. We spent hours and hours for an open debate on the floor, and there were 17 minutes of debate on the floor—17 minutes in something exceeding 17 hours. No wonder people are frustrated with the way they would like to see their government work, the way the government should work, and the excuses we come up with to keep the government from doing what it ought to do in a way that people can openly see and be proud of.

I look forward to the quorum call no longer being the daily flag of the U.S. Senate.

Maybe, appropriately, seeing no one here, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NOMINATION OF GINA HASPEL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, earlier today the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence heard from the President's pick for Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Gina Haspel. Actually, we had an open hearing this morning, and I just returned from a recently concluded closed hearing, during which classified information was shared with the committee and discussed with the nominee.

As we know, the President's nominees for various positions have been the victims of hearsay, innuendo, and rumor. Thankfully, Ms. Haspel had the opportunity today to respond to some of the questions—and attacks, really—that have been posed against her in the public. She has now had a chance to respond, and I thought she did so with tremendous knowledge, grace, and the kind of temperament you would hope for in a Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

She exemplified the core attributes we have come to know about her since she was nominated: professional integrity, an innate sense of loyalty to her country, and a strong drive to work hard, not just for the advancement of her individual career but also to protect Americans and put our national security first.

The fact that she is here today, as President Trump's nominee to become the first female Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, is a testament to both her character and her exceptional, decades-long career as an intelligence professional.

All the while, she has endeared herself to her colleagues in the intelligence community, who have an immense amount of respect for her and her work. In fact, in addition to being the first female Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Ms. Haspel would be the first operations officer in perhaps 40 years or more. In other words, at the CIA they have analysts, they have people who do operations, who are case officers and who do intelligence work, and, then, they have other people who perform technical intelligence activity. She would be the first in 40 years to actually have worked in some of the hot spots around the world that I will mention more about here in a moment.

Yesterday, I spoke about some aspects of her career, about some of the pieces that our colleagues across the aisle have left out of the picture, which, in fairness, should be painted in full context so people can understand that her career, spanning 33 years, is far more than a couple of anecdotes or caricatures of her experience. In other words, she is not defined by those experiences. Although, as she has said

today, we have all learned from those experiences.

Her 33 years of service showcase an unparalleled commitment to the Central Intelligence Agency and a devotion to the rule of law. She understands that when the intelligence agencies don't follow the rules of the road, somebody is going to be held to account for it at a later time. In this case, ironically, having followed the rule of law, we find that some of our colleagues from across the aisle want to relitigate decades-old incidents after the fact of 9/11, where, relying on the premier legal authorities in the country from the Department of Justice and having received orders from the Commander in Chief, they simply did their job and now are being questioned in a way that suggests they did something less than honorable, when, in fact, they did exactly what they were asked to do.

The fact is that here in America we have not seen a follow-on attack from 9/11. I mentioned yesterday a book I was reviewing that reminded me that in the days following 9/11, on which 3,000 people died—some at the Pentagon, where one plane crashed, and two others crashed at the World Trade Center—there was some chatter about a potential nuclear device getting into the hands of al-Qaida, the same people who took down the two towers and hit the Pentagon.

That would have been catastrophic, obviously. Thankfully, as a result of the good investigatory work and intelligence collection that the intelligence community acquired, we learned that those rumors did not end up proving to be true. But that sort of sets the tone for the environment and attitude that many had about the potential for follow-on attacks, which would have been tremendously devastating.

It is a strange business that we ask our intelligence officials to play to the edge of the law—in other words, to follow the law but to be aggressive, to be forward-leaning to prevent these attacks. Then, when they do exactly that, we come back years later, when we are feeling safe and secure, and say: Well, you went too far.

We can imagine what it would have been like if there had been another follow-on attack during which American citizens were killed. We can imagine that our intelligence community would be criticized for allowing that to happen, for somehow not stopping it, finding out about it, and preventing it.

Unfortunately, too many people have 20/20 hindsight and are engaged in second-guessing. Frankly, for people who serve honorably in the intelligence community, it seems like a lose-lose proposition: Do too much and prevent an attack, and we will criticize you. Don't do enough and an attack occurs, and we will criticize you for that.

Suffice it to say that in all respects, during her career Gina Haspel has acted in accordance with the law, as determined by the Department of Jus-

tice. By the way, the Supreme Court of the United States is not going to hand out an opinion in a case where the executive branch has to act. Opinions handed down by the Office of Legal Counsel in the Justice Department are the authoritative legal guidance for executive branch agencies like the CIA.

Ms. Haspel has worked in assignments from Africa and Europe, and she has been posted to dangerous capitals around the world. She has been shot at, survived a coup d'etat, and run clandestine assets against hard targets.

Those who have worked with her say her management skills and integrity are unmatched. That is why she served as a station chief, the Deputy Director of the National Clandestine Service, and Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency itself. All of this experience is extraordinary and it is important, and it is exactly what our country needs in this uncertain time.

Former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testified in recent memory that, in his 50 years in the intelligence business, he has never before seen such a diverse array of threats confronting our country—from North Korea to Iran, to Russia, to China, to the terrorism threat, to domestic home-grown terrorist attacks inspired by social media and online activity from overseas.

America clearly needs someone with the deep expertise and understanding of the Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence community and someone who doesn't have to get up to speed. Americans need someone with extensive counterterrorism experience who has worked with difficult and hostile intelligence services and, I would say, also with our friends and allies around the world. Some of the relationships we have with other countries, like Britain, are some of the most important relationships we have—government to government, intelligence community to intelligence community. Ms. Haspel has the admiration and respect of those coalition agencies around the world.

She may well be the most qualified person ever to be nominated for the role of CIA Director. But we saw today in the hearing that there is a determination by some to relitigate the past. We saw an attempt to relitigate issues that have been closed for a long time, going on 17, almost 20 years.

There were questions about Ms. Haspel's role in counterterrorism efforts in the days immediately following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. I am not questioning the questions, but I am questioning using some of these issues as pretext to block or to vote against her nomination. She was accused of making decisions that clearly were made by her supervisor, when it came to getting rid of videotapes because of concerns for the safety and security of the intelligence officers depicted on those videotapes, even though there were verbatim cables of the activity on the tapes. Obviously, in this case, the