

should expect in anybody who serves as a Justice on the Supreme Court.

A law professor from Yale wrote an op-ed for the New York Times last week titled “A liberal’s case for Brett Kavanaugh.” The professor called Judge Kavanaugh “a superb nominee” and said that “it is hard to name anyone with judicial credentials as strong as those of Judge Kavanaugh.”

Another liberal law professor called him a “highly qualified mainstream conservative judge.” He cited Judge Kavanaugh’s reasoning as “an example of the judging ideal, setting aside ideology and party politics, and just trying to get the law right.” That is a liberal former law professor. He said Judge Kavanaugh gives “an independent judiciary the job it is supposed to do: Interpret the law.”

There are lawyers who have appeared before Judge Kavanaugh who said the same things. I am not a lawyer, I haven’t done these sorts of things, but I understand there are surveys of lawyers who appear before judges in court, people who have won cases and people who have lost cases. They put up their ideas about what they thought about the judge afterward.

Across the board, they called him “an excellent judge.” They said that he “has a history of excellent legal argument and analysis,” someone who can think intellectually, think clearly, and come up with a legal argument and analysis to make the assessment, to apply the law as written. One lawyer actually said: “It is daunting and humbling to be in front of that brainpower.” This was an anonymous survey of lawyers who appear before Judge Kavanaugh. I don’t know if they won or lost, but people get to put in their opinions, winners and losers, after cases in anonymous surveys. “It is daunting and humbling to be in front of that brainpower.” This wasn’t people just trying to kiss up to the judge to win favor in a case; these are results from people after the case who were just telling it like it is. “Excellent legal judgment,” they say.

If you look beyond the courtroom, people are just as willing to talk about Judge Kavanaugh’s character as a person, not just a judge. That is part of it—to look at somebody’s legal philosophy, their intellect, and their character—when trying to assess a judge who has been nominated, to say: Is this person the right person to be a Justice on the Supreme Court?

The Washington Post even ran a piece by a woman who knows Judge Kavanaugh because he coaches her daughter’s basketball team. She wrote that she was impressed by “his traits of personal kindness, leadership, and willingness to help when called on.”

There are three things I look for in a nominee for the Supreme Court: judicial philosophy, a strong intellect, and a solid character. What we are hearing is overwhelming evidence from people who know him that Judge Kavanaugh has all of these qualities. He is some-

one who takes the law and the Constitution at face value.

The Constitution is a legal document, not a living document, and it was built for certainty. He knows that a judge’s job is to “interpret the law,” not to legislate from the bench, “not to make the law or make policy.” That is what he actually said in a speech last year.

He has an extremely strong intellect, and I can’t imagine there is anyone out there who can deny that. “It is daunting and humbling to be in front of that brainpower”—this is what one of the lawyers who appeared before him said. And he is a person of solid character. That is what we are hearing from people who have known him over the years from being extremely active in the community. The New York Times summarized it: “A conservative stalwart wins praise for his intellect and civility.”

So what is there for Democrats to come to the floor and object to? Why are they objecting to all of this? Why are some Democrats already saying they oppose a judge known for his intellect and civility? They were actually saying it before he was even named by President Trump. Whomever President Trump names, they are going to vote no. It is astonishing to see Democrats making that decision. Then they are asking for reams and reams of documents after they have already said they are against Judge Kavanaugh. What are they looking for? It is amazing.

That is what I believe the big difference is between Republicans and Democrats in Washington: Republican Presidents choose judges and justices to follow the law; Democratic Presidents seem to pick judges and justices who are guaranteed to push liberal policies and liberal agendas, preconceived notions of how they should rule on a case before they hear the facts. They know the way they are going to go, maybe using things like emotion, sympathy, and empathy. The Constitution is a legal document.

Even though you have legal experts from around the political world and around the spectrum of all sides of the aisle who praise his intellect and civility, it is not good enough for the liberal activists in this country. They don’t even want to consider Judge Kavanaugh’s qualifications, and they have said it here on the floor of the Senate and on television, if you listen. They are already making opposition to his nomination a liberal litmus test for Democrats in this Senate, and I am sorry to say that more than a few Democrats seem to be playing along. We have seen Democrats in the Senate who have already said that they don’t care about Judge Kavanaugh’s intellect; they don’t care that he is “just trying to get the law right”; they don’t care that, as one lawyer said, “it is hard to name anyone with judicial credentials as strong as those of Judge Kavanaugh.”

When you have someone with these qualifications, Senators ought to be looking at his record. They should look at the 300 decisions he has written in 12 years on the bench. It is absolutely the right thing to look at. They should meet him and talk with him.

We have just begun this confirmation hearing process. I hope that more Democrats in the Senate will have an open mind about this nominee. I hope they will consider the kind of person we should have on the Supreme Court and then make their decisions about whether Judge Kavanaugh has those qualities. From what I have seen, he absolutely does.

I plan to continue to look into his record and listen to people who know him best. I plan to sit down and talk with him. Everything I have seen so far tells me that this is someone who is exactly the kind of Justice we need on the Supreme Court.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, to my colleagues, let me just say that we must speak out and act.

President Trump’s appearance with Russia’s President Putin—a U.S. President capitulating to a strongman dictator, unprecedented in American history—compromised America’s national security and brings into question whether America can be relied upon as the leader of the free world.

With Mr. Trump standing with Mr. Putin while he discredited America’s investigation into Russian meddling—this is an American President, with a dictator, challenging the investigation being done against Russia—the President questioned the conclusions of U.S. intelligence agencies. He left unchallenged Mr. Putin’s lies and illegal military invasions.

In short, Mr. Trump did Mr. Putin’s bidding. In Russia, they are smiling; at the White House, they are scrambling.

Congress must speak out and act. Congress must repudiate the President’s actions to make clear to the American people and the world that Russia, directed by Mr. Putin, attacked our free election system in 2016 and tried to tip the scales in favor of Mr. Trump.

Russia illegally invaded the sovereign state of Ukraine and illegally annexed Crimea, which the United States must make clear we will never recognize. Russia, under Mr. Putin, murders its political opponents and journalists. Russia has interfered in the politics of several European democratic states.

Six months ago, I authored, on behalf of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Democrats, a report entitled “Putin’s Asymmetrical Assault on Democracy in Russia and Europe: Implications for U.S. National Security.”

I sent a copy of that report to President Trump and hoped that he would absorb it and use it in his meeting with

Mr. Putin. Unfortunately, he either didn't read it or didn't heed the advice in that report.

That report spells out in detail the asymmetrical arsenal that Mr. Putin uses. Yes, he uses his military, propaganda, and cyber; he supports organized crime and corruption, weaponizes energy, and supports fringe political groups, all to attack our democratic system of government.

The report spells out numerous recommendations for steps we should take to protect our national security against what Russia is trying to do to us. The report spells out several recommendations I just want to underscore today. We urge the President to assert Presidential leadership and launch a national response, an inter-agency response, so we make it clear that we will not tolerate this.

Mr. Trump has done just the opposite. He has downplayed any significance to what Russia has done, has not allowed us to have a coordinated effort with the executive branch, and has fought what Congress has tried to do in giving him additional resources in order to prepare us against what Mr. Putin is doing.

The report goes on to further recommend that we expose and freeze Kremlin-linked dirty money. The administration has not done that.

It goes on to say that we should subject state hybrid threat actors to an escalating sanctions regime. Here Congress did act. We passed the CAATSA statute, which requires—these are mandatory sanctions against Russia because of what they did to us in 2016 and what they did in regard to the Ukraine and their other activities. This administration has not fully utilized those sanctions that are available under the legislation we passed.

The report calls for publicizing the Kremlin's global malign influence efforts and building an international coalition to counter hybrid threats. Mr. Trump did just the opposite in his most recent foreign trip. In his performance in Brussels with NATO and then later in London, he not only took the opportunity to criticize two of our closest allies, Mrs. Merkel in Germany and Ms. May in London, England—the U.K.—but he also challenged the unity of Europe, weighing in with regard to Brexit and the politics of Brexit. That is not how the President brings unity among our allies in order to stand tall against the threats of Russia.

The report goes on to say that we need to build global cyber defenses and norms. Congress has appropriated funds; the administration has not fully utilized those funds.

We need to hold social media companies accountable. We see the infiltration of Russia into our social media platforms. Europe has already taken action to make sure that it identifies and is protected against infiltration of foreign entities getting involved in trying to influence policy in their country. The United States, under Mr. Trump, has not taken similar action.

First and foremost, we need to recognize Russia for what it is today—not the Russian people, but under the leadership of Mr. Putin, Russia is an adversary. They are against our system of government, and they are trying to bring down our system of government.

I saw the President's tweet this morning, and I just want to acknowledge that we want to have relations with all countries in the world. I want the relationship between the United States and Russia to be on a better plateau, but it has to be under our terms, not Mr. Putin's terms. That is the problem with what the President did in Helsinki. He allowed Mr. Putin to control the dialogue and allowed Mr. Putin to look as though everything he is doing is reasonable when it is not. If you give Mr. Putin space, he will push to fill it, and then he will go even further.

Ten years ago, Mr. Putin saw an opportunity. He saw an opportunity to put a wedge in regard to the NATO expansion and the growth of a unified Western Front. He saw that opportunity in the independent state of Georgia, and he took advantage of that. Russian troops invaded. They are still there today, and Georgia is still not part of NATO.

Mr. Putin's strategy paid off. The Western World gave him that open space; he took advantage of it.

In 2014, Mr. Putin, based upon his experience in Georgia—and also, by the way, based upon his experience in Moldova—said “Well, we can do the same in Ukraine,” and they invaded Ukraine. They took over Crimea; they illegally annexed Crimea, and guess what. Ukraine, today, is nowhere closer to being a NATO ally as a result of Mr. Putin's strategies.

It worked for him, not for us. That is not in our national security interest. The President gives him a pass.

They tried it in Montenegro. Russia financed operations of a coup to try to prevent the parliamentary elections from having a government that would ratify NATO. The people of Montenegro stood up and said no. They fought it, and they won. Now Montenegro is a NATO ally. We can't give this space to Mr. Putin.

Mr. Putin, not just in the United States, but in Europe, interfered in elections. But what happened in 2016 in America? This is a fact; this is not subject to debate. We know that Russia, directed by Mr. Putin, interfered in our elections. That has been confirmed by our intelligence community. It has been confirmed by our own Intelligence Committee here in the U.S. Senate. This is not something that you debate. We know that is a fact. We understand the President has tried to convince the public here in America that may not be true, but those are the facts. We know the facts. We are privy to the facts.

We know that Russia interfered in our elections, but the message from Helsinki, President Trump's message to President Putin, is: OK. Let's move

on. That gives space to Mr. Putin. His calculation: 2018 is fair game. I can do whatever I want in the U.S. elections. After all, I know the President will be on my side and will not hold me, Russia, accountable for interference in the U.S. elections.

That is certainly not in our interest. Congress must speak out and act. We have to protect this country. It is our responsibility. We are an independent branch of government. We need to speak out on behalf of our Nation.

Let me just lay out issues that I hope we will work on not only in response to the President's summit with Mr. Putin but also because it is our responsibility as an independent branch of government to speak out for America.

First, we need to protect the integrity of the Mueller investigation. I am not going to prejudge what the Mueller investigation will come in with. I have confidence that Mr. Mueller will do his work.

Mr. Trump has been openly critical over and over and over and over again about this investigation. It is outrageous that the head of the executive branch of government is trying to compromise the checks and balances in our own system, but we have to make sure that the checks and balances remain. We have to make sure that we protect the integrity of the Mueller investigation.

Congress needs to pass legislation, and there is legislation that has been recommended by our Judiciary Committee that would protect the integrity of the Mueller campaign. We should take up that legislation and pass it immediately.

I said that I will not prejudge what Mr. Mueller will come in with. We know there are people who have been indicted. We know that Russia has been engaged in the election. We know that some Americans were involved.

Was there collusion with the Trump campaign? It will be up to the Mueller investigation to give us those findings. But we do know from Helsinki that Mr. Trump openly colluded with Mr. Putin in regard to an orchestrated message coming out of Helsinki.

Secondly, Congress needs to exercise its oversight capacity with hearings. That is our responsibility.

I was pleased to see that Senator CORKER announced that Mike Pompeo, the Secretary of State, will be before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday of next week. This meeting is long overdue.

Let me just remind my colleagues that this meeting is being set up to get our very first briefing on what happened in Singapore in the President's meeting with Kim Jong Un in North Korea. We haven't had a single briefing in Congress on the North Korean summit.

Now we have Mr. Pompeo coming up here for North Korea. I urge Mr. Pompeo and Senator CORKER to make sure that Mr. Pompeo is prepared and has the time not only to address North

Korea but also to address what happened in Helsinki. We have a right, an obligation, to find out.

While we are able to question representatives from the executive branch in regard to Helsinki, let's make sure that we have a chance to talk to Jon Huntsman, our Ambassador to Russia, to get his take, his assessment of what happened. We need to talk to our Director of National Intelligence as to his assessments. We need to have oversight hearings here in Congress.

Most importantly, we need to understand what happened in the room—where it happened—where Mr. Putin and Mr. Trump spent over 2 hours. We have no information about what happened in that room. We have a responsibility as Members of Congress to understand what discussions took place, what commitments in regard to our elections, in regard to Ukraine, in regard to Syria, in regard to North Korea, in regard to Iran. We have a lot of interest in knowing what took place, and we should get that information now. That is our constitutional responsibility. We need to speak out and act to carry out our responsibility.

This is not a partisan issue. This is a constitutional issue of what we do. We are a check and balance in the system. The public expects us to act that way and to get that information.

We should also strengthen the sanctions regime against Russia. I say that mindful that the bill we passed last year, the CAASTA bill—I worked very closely with my colleagues in drafting that bill—provides a whole array of options to President Trump to impose new sanctions against Russia for their activities. Many of these sanctions, by the way, are mandatory. The President has no discretion. I say that with some disbelief because these sanctions have not been imposed yet, even though they are mandatory sanctions.

So Congress needs to speak out and act. We need to speak out to make sure these sanctions are indeed imposed, and we have to make sure we strengthen the sanctions regime, if the President needs more of a reminder or needs additional tools in order to act against Russia. One thing we want to make crystal clear is, we don't want to see the weakening of any of these sanctions. I think many of us know about conversations that took place in the past about Mr. Trump's thoughts about easing up some of these sanctions. We have to make sure that, in fact, they are not.

It was interesting that during the summit, there was a conversation against Mr. Browder about the Magnitsky sanctions that have been imposed by Congress. Browder worked with Senator MCCAIN on that legislation. We have to make sure those sanctions remain in place and are strengthened, not weakened. That is our responsibility to make sure that takes place.

We must also make sure that we protect the integrity of our election sys-

tem. We have appropriated funds for this. There is legislation that is pending by Members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle. We now know we are even more vulnerable. We have seen some indictments of late that point out what Russia could be doing in the 2018 elections, which are only less than 4 months away.

One of the fundamental principles of our democracy is our free and fair elections. We have a responsibility to make sure they are free from international tampering and the influence Russia may try to play in this election cycle. We need to take concrete steps to make sure that is done.

Lastly, I suggest that the Senate go on record repudiating President Trump's actions in Helsinki. The Republican leadership should bring to the floor of the U.S. Senate such a resolution. It is our responsibility to consider such a resolution.

By passing such a resolution, we can restore confidence to the American people and to the world that the United States, indeed, is the leader of the free world.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I oppose the nomination of Andrew Oldham to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Oldham is only 39 years old. He checks the Federalist Society box, having been a member since law school of that rightwing legal group that vets all of President Trump's nominees. Mr. Oldham has spent much of his career litigating on behalf of Republican elected officials in Texas State government, where he worked on challenges to the Affordable Care Act, the DACA and DAPA programs, the Voting Rights Act, Fair Housing Act regulations, "Ban the Box" regulations on job applications, and Clean Air Act regulations, among many others.

Mr. Oldham's extreme ideology is apparent from statements he has made in his personal capacity. At his nomination hearing, he refused to say that the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* was correctly decided. That was an astonishing moment. Every Supreme Court nominee who has been asked this question has said he or she believed *Brown v. Board* was correctly decided. In recent hearings before the Judiciary Committee, nominees have answered yes to this question without hesitation; yet Mr. Oldham wouldn't answer.

If a nominee refuses to say that *Brown v. Board* was correctly decided, it certainly raises questions in my mind about the nominee's judgment, but that is not all Mr. Oldham has said.

At his hearing, he refused to say whether he agreed that voter discrimination still exists in the United States.

He gave an interview in 2016 where he described the Supreme Court as "the most dangerous branch" and said "they often fail to enforce our sacred rights that are in the Constitution, while creating rights that are not." Keep in mind, this is a Supreme Court where the majority of justices were appointed by Republican Presidents.

He gave a speech to the Federalist Society in 2016 where he said, "I have particular things that I think are illegitimate in the way that we conduct modern American law." He went on to say, "It's not that I disagree with a particular Department of Labor regulation or a particular IRS regulation; it is the entire existence of this edifice of administrative law that is constitutionally suspect."

He also wrote in a law review article that "the Sherman Act, as it is currently understood, is unconstitutional." The Sherman Act is one of our foundational antitrust laws; it prohibits monopolies and restraints of trade.

Mr. Oldham's views are clearly outside the judicial mainstream. His own words and writings show an extreme ideological agenda.

Of course, like all of President Trump's nominees, he has promised he would cast all his views aside if confirmed and simply follow the law. But time after time, we have seen these nominees get confirmed to the bench and then start interpreting the law to produce outcomes that align with their preexisting, Federalist Society-approved views and side with corporations and wealthy elites over working Americans.

Mr. Oldham is ideologically extreme, he has shown instances of terrible judgment, and he has said things that would make litigants question whether he could be a fair and impartial judge. I oppose his nomination.

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I rise to speak to the integrity of the character and the career of Andy Oldham, the President's nominee to be a circuit judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Andy represents the best of what Texas's legal community has to offer to our Federal courts. Andy Oldham was born to high school sweethearts. His parents, like his grandparents before them, knew struggles and knew hard work.

Andy's father was raised in a trailer with four other siblings, and Andy's grandfather spent years away from his family, first fighting in World War II and then in Korea. His mother was raised by her divorced mother, and Andy's mother helped manage the household starting at age 8.

Growing up in these humble beginnings taught both of Andy's parents the value of hard work. His father drove a cement truck and cleaned deep fryers in restaurants to pay his way through college. His mother was one of

the first women to attend the University of Virginia. Together, both enrolled in the Medical College of Virginia, where his father became a doctor and his mother became a dentist.

Andy's parents had enormous student debts to pay, and so Andy learned what it was like to grow up with little as well, but he likewise learned the value of an education from his parents.

Andy went to the University of Virginia on a full academic scholarship, graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA and at the top of his class. He then became a Truman Scholar and went on to attend Harvard Law School.

Andy graduated from Harvard Law magna cum laude and clerked for Judge David Sentelle on the DC Circuit, one of the most respected Federal appellate judges in the country, and then clerked for Justice Samuel Alito on the Supreme Court of the United States.

He then worked as an attorney advisor for 2 years in the Office of Legal Counsel in the U.S. Department of Justice under the George W. Bush administration.

Andy then went into private practice at Kellogg Hansen here in Washington, DC. From there, Andy went to the Texas solicitor general's office to serve as the deputy solicitor general of Texas. I can state that office is usually a pretty tight ship.

After that, he joined Governor Abbott to serve as his legal counsel. He is now the general counsel for the Governor and has spent all but 3 years of his career in public service.

If I may say, it shows a depth of character and a devotion to his country that Andy would stay in public service for so long, so dutifully, while forgoing the great rewards that come with private practice. He is devoted to the practice of law, and over the years, Andy has displayed a keen understanding of the Constitution and how it applies and guides us to this very day.

I am confident Andy will not substitute his own policy preferences, his own opinions for the rule of law, but he will instead serve the people of Texas and the American people by respecting the law as written—as written in the Constitution and as written in Federal law—passed by this Congress and signed by the President. Our courts and our country are well-served by judges with this dedication, wisdom, and forbearance.

In his career, Andy has argued across the country in State and Federal courts. He has appeared and argued numerous times before the Fifth Circuit, and he has argued twice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

He has earned widespread praise from both Democrats and Republicans, and he was recommended to the Judiciary Committee by esteemed legal voices from both the left and right. Andy is respected across the political spectrum. I know my colleagues in the Senate will return the same respect when they vote today to confirm Andy

Oldham as a circuit judge of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Andy will be the fifth judge we have confirmed for the Fifth Circuit, one of the finest courts in the country—a court I have been privileged to argue before many times. Andy will be the third Texan and fifth circuit judge in the last year and a half, and that, I think, is one of the greatest legacies of President Trump and this Republican Senate; namely, the confirmation of principled constitutionalists to the Federal court; judges who will be faithful to the Constitution and Bill of Rights, who will stand steadfastly to protect our fundamental liberties, to protect free speech and religious liberty, to protect the Second Amendment, the right to keep and bear arms, to protect the Tenth Amendment, the fundamental liberties of the people against ever-expanding Federal power.

This is a legacy that was front and center as to why the American people elected this majority, and it is a legacy that will benefit Texans and Americans for generations to come.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRUMP-PUTIN SUMMIT

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, as we all know, in this country, in 2016, the Russian Government weighed a covert, multifaceted criminal campaign to interfere in our elections. We now know it was intended to help then-Candidate Donald Trump win the Presidency. We don't know the full impact of Russia's interference, but it is beyond debate that it happened.

Russia, as we now found out, used inflammatory propaganda—it actually was fake news—attempting to suppress Democratic turnout and boost support for Donald Trump. They also stole communications belonging to the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign, which were then strategically released to maximize their impact. They were released at times when they could counter negative news stories about Donald Trump.

Just last week, 12 Russian intelligence officers were charged with hacking campaign officials' emails and State election boards. In just over a year—in what may rank as the most productive special counsel investigation in our Nation's history—32 people and 3 companies have been charged or pled guilty as part of the Russian investigation. We likely will not know the full extent of Russia's interference until the special counsel's investigation is complete.

But what is clear—and this is what should concern Republicans and Demo-

crats alike—is that our democracy, our great country, was attacked by a foreign adversary. And two days ago, on an international stage, standing shoulder to shoulder with Vladimir Putin, our President sided with that attacker.

Instead of forcefully condemning Russia's attack on our democracy, its role in annexing Crimea, poisoning individuals with chemical weapons on the soil of one of our closest allies, Russia's downing of a passenger airline with nearly 300 innocent civilians onboard, or undermining democracies around the world, our President offered only praise for the authoritarian President Putin. He then repeated his conspiracy theories about the FBI and called the Russia investigation a "witch-hunt"—denigrating our law enforcement institutions, while standing beside the foe they work so hard to protect all Americans from—Republicans and Democrats alike.

In my 44 years as a Senator, I have never seen anything like it. I can think of no Republican President and no Democratic President who would ever do this. I never thought it would be possible in our country before President Trump took office.

Yesterday, the President attempted to walk back his decision to side with Russia over our own intelligence agencies. He attempted to do it because of the criticism he got from both Republicans and Democrats, but as many of my colleagues told me would happen, President Trump walked back his walk back. He reiterated that the interference "could have been other people. There are a lot of people out there."

This morning on Twitter—where apparently he does his deepest thinking—he claimed that people at the higher ends of intelligence loved his press conference in Helsinki. I do not think anyone here doubts that the President meant what he said and said what he meant in Helsinki. And, after their two-hour private meeting in Helsinki, I do not think President Putin has any doubt either.

We have to know that Russia shares neither our values nor our interests. Russia is not our friend. Of course, we want to see improved relations with Russia on Syria, on nuclear proliferation, and on many critical issues, but for that to happen, Russia needs to respect our democracy and values. We must not slouch down to theirs.

The United States is the leader of the free world. The free world is under threat, as it has so often been. But these threats are not supposed to come from within.

Just moments ago, when asked if Russia is still targeting the United States, the President inexplicably said "no."

That is not the truth.

Russia is still targeting the United States. This is despite his Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, confirming just last week that Russia is, indeed, still targeting our digital infrastructure and interfering in our democracy. Director Coats compared it to the