

Today, we face an unprecedented situation of a President who, for whatever reason, refuses to acknowledge the full scope of the threat to American democracy. Either he really doesn't understand what is happening—and that is possible—or he is under Russian influence because of compromising information that they may have on him or because he is ultimately more sympathetic to Russia's authoritarian oligarchic form of government than he is to American democracy.

Whatever the reason, Congress must act now. Democrats must act and Republicans must act if we are serious about preserving American democracy. We must demand—and I know this is a radical idea—that the President of the United States represent the interests of the American people and not Russia.

Let us be as clear as we can be. Russia has been interfering not only in U.S. elections but in the elections of other democracies—the United Kingdom, France, Germany.

I yield to the Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend, the Senator from Vermont, for this outstanding resolution. It is a resolution. I don't see who can object to it. We ask for five things in this resolution: that our government accept the assessment of our own Intelligence Committees about Russia's interference; that we move aggressively to protect our election systems; that the sanctions that this body passed 98 to 2 finally be implemented by the Trump administration; that there be no interference in Mr. Mueller's investigation; and that there must be cooperation.

Who in America would object to that? Maybe a small group of hard-right ideologues, but no one else.

Who in this body will object to it? This is an outstanding resolution.

I know my friend from Vermont would agree with me. We need action in addition to resolutions, but this is an excellent start. I urge all of my colleagues to support this fullheartedly. Our country is at risk.

The Senator from Vermont is sounding a clarion call and saying in a bipartisan way that we should strengthen our country, not weaken it, as the President has done over the last week. I hope this will get unanimous support from every Member of this body—whether they be Democrat, Independent, or Republican; whether they be liberal, moderate, or conservative. If you love America, if you care about our security, support this resolution.

I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank the Democratic leader for his strong efforts on this enormously important issue. I want to reiterate that this really is not a Democratic resolution. If there is any resolution that should be bipartisan, this is it. My Republican colleagues believe in democracy. I know that. We believe in democracy. Together, we and the American people must make it clear that we will not allow Russia or

any other country on Earth to undermine our democracy.

Let's be very clear that Russia has not just been interfering in U.S. elections but in elections of other democracies around the world—the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, to name just a few countries.

Russia's goal is to advance its own interests by weakening the transatlantic alliance of democracies that arose after World War II, while also inflaming internal divisions in our country and in other countries. We should also be clear that this interference is directed from the very highest levels of the Russian Government. Last week, Special Counsel Mueller announced a set of indictments of 12 members of Russia's military intelligence service, the GRU. There can be no doubt that given the nature of the Russian Government, Vladimir Putin was directly involved in this effort.

But our concern is not only what has already happened; more importantly, it is what could happen in the future. What happened in 2016 was an outrage, but we have to make sure it does not happen in 2018 and future elections.

Last week, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, a former Republican U.S. Senator, raised the alarm on growing cyber attacks and threats against the United States in a range of areas—a range of areas, not just elections—including Federal, State, and local government agencies, the military, business, and academia, saying that the situation is at a “critical point.” Coats said Russia is “the most aggressive foreign actor, no question, and they continue their efforts to undermine our democracy.” Coats compared the warning signs to those the United States faced ahead of the September 11 terrorist attacks. This is a clear and present threat to our democratic system and those of our allies.

Ultimately, of course we want a peaceful relationship with Russia. We do not want a return to the Cold War, and we surely do not seek any type of military conflict. But at the same time, we must be very clear that we oppose what Putin is doing, both in terms of his foreign policy and his domestic policy.

On foreign policy, we will not accept Russia interfering in the elections of democratic countries, stoking political tensions by promoting hatred and suspicion of immigrants and minorities, and trying to undermine longstanding alliances between democratic allies.

In 2014, in violation of international law, Russia invaded neighboring Ukraine and annexed the Crimea region.

Russia has assassinated political opponents abroad, most recently through the use of poison in Salisbury, England. The British Government concluded in that attack that it was most likely carried out by Russia's military intelligence service.

Domestically, Putin has undermined democracy in Russia, crushing free

speech, jailing political opponents, harassing and assassinating journalists who criticize him, and increasing persecution of ethnic and religious minorities.

On Monday in Helsinki, President Trump had an opportunity to speak out on all of these things and more, to confront Putin about these destabilizing and inhumane policies. He chose not to.

Well, here is the main point: If for whatever reason the President of the United States is not going to do what is right, Congress must do it. Democrats must do it. Republicans must do it.

The Congress must make it clear—and this is the resolution I am introducing and asking for unanimous consent—the Congress must make it clear that we accept the assessment of our intelligence community with regard to Russian election interfering in our country and in other democracies. Does anybody doubt the truth of that?

The Congress must move aggressively to protect our election system from interference by Russia or any foreign power. Does anybody deny the importance of that?

The Congress must demand that the sanctions against Russia, as the Democratic leader mentioned, which passed with 98 votes, be fully implemented—98 votes on that issue.

The Congress must make it clear that we will not accept any interference with the ongoing investigation of Special Counsel Mueller, such as the offer of preemptive pardons or the firing of Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, and that the President must cooperate with this investigation. Time and again, I have heard Republicans, including leaders, make it clear that there should not be an interference in that investigation. There is nothing new here on that point.

Finally—nothing new here, either—the Congress must make it clear to President Trump that his job is to protect the values that millions of Americans struggled, fought, and died to defend: justice, democracy, and equality; that he is the President of the United States and his job is to protect the interests of the American people, not Russia.

Tweets, comments, and press conferences—and I know many of my Republican colleagues have been involved in those activities. They are fine. They are constructive. But we need more from Republican Senators now. It is time for the Senate to rein in the President's dangerous behavior.

If their leadership—Senator McCONNELL—will not allow votes on this extraordinarily important matter, then my Republican colleagues must join with Democrats to make it happen, or all of their fine-sounding words of concern will become meaningless.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 582

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, as in legislative session, the

Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 582, submitted earlier today. I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, Trump derangement syndrome has officially come to the Senate. The hatred for the President is so intense that partisans would rather risk war than give diplomacy a chance. Does anybody remember that Ronald Reagan sat down with Gorbachev and that we lessened the nuclear tensions? We need to still have those openings.

Nobody is excusing Russia's meddling in our elections. Absolutely we should protect the integrity of our elections. But simply bringing the hatred of the President to the Senate floor in order to say "We are done with diplomacy. We are going to add more and more sanctions"—you know what. I would rather that we still have open channels of discussion with the Russians. At the height of the Cold War, Kennedy had a direct line to Khrushchev, and it may have prevented the end of the world.

Should we be so crazy about partisanship that we now say "We don't want to talk to the Russians. We are not going to have relations with the Russians"? We should stand firm and say "Stay the hell out of our elections," but we should not stick our head in the ground and say we are not going to talk to them.

I would like to see the Russians leave Ukraine. I think we could do it through diplomacy. We are not going to have it if we don't talk to them.

I would like to see the Russians help more with North Korea, with denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We are not going to have it if we just simply heap more sanctions on and say that we are not going to talk to the Russians and that anybody who talks to the Russians is committing treason.

For goodness' sake, we have the former head of the CIA, John Brennan, gallivanting across TV—now being paid for his opinion—to call the President treasonous. This has to stop. This is crazy hatred of the President. Crazy partisanship is driving this.

For goodness' sake, we don't excuse Russia's behavior in our election, but we don't have to have war. We can still have engagement. We have engaged Russia throughout 70 years, while also acknowledging the imperfections of their system, the parts of their system we vehemently disagree with—the lack of freedom, the lack of human rights. Yet we had open channels of negotiation, open channels of communication.

I could not object more strongly to this.

Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the Senator from Kentucky just told us that he wants dialogue with Russia, he wants diplomacy with Russia, and that he thinks it is important that we communicate with Russia. I agree. Who disagrees with that? There is not one word in this resolution that suggests that the United States of America should not aggressively engage in diplomacy with Russia to ease the tensions that exist between the two countries. What the Senator said is totally irrelevant to what is in this resolution.

What this resolution says is that we are going to tell Russia: Stop interfering in our elections.

What this resolution is about is telling Russia to stop interfering with the elections in democratic countries all over the world.

What this resolution is about is saying that we should implement the sanctions overwhelmingly voted for by Congress.

What this resolution is about is that we will not accept interference with the ongoing investigation of Special Counsel Robert Mueller.

What this resolution says is that the President must cooperate with the investigation of Mr. Mueller.

That is what this resolution is about. It has nothing to do with ending diplomacy with Russia at all. That is inaccurate.

I would hope that, if not today, in the very near future, Republicans will join Democrats and do the right thing in our effort to preserve American democracy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 583

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, we are here to put forward a resolution and ask unanimous consent for its adoption. This is the Flake-Coons resolution, which Senator COONS will speak on and I will take it from there.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor with my colleague Senator FLAKE from Arizona to send a strong, clear, and, importantly, a bipartisan message to the American people that we stand with the men and women of the Department of Justice and the men and women of the U.S. intelligence community.

We support the ongoing investigation into Russian interference in our elections, and we must act—and act unequivocally—to hold Russia accountable for its actions.

Just 3 days after the U.S. intelligence community issued a detailed and staggering finding that led to an indictment against 12 Russian military intelligence officers for interfering in our 2016 election, President Trump stood shoulder to shoulder with President Putin and failed to challenge Putin's claim that his government played no role in the effort to undermine our democracy.

In fact, when asked, at the time, whether he believed Putin's denial or

the U.S. intelligence community, President Trump said: "I have confidence in both parties."

He has subsequently walked back those comments, but I think it is important that the Senate be on the record as saying that our intelligence community is clear, our law enforcement community is clear, and today the Senate should be clear.

So today Senator FLAKE and I are putting forward a resolution that, in its language, commends the Department of Justice for its ongoing investigation into Russia's interference in our last election—the one that led to last week's 11-count indictment, offering the most thorough and detailed accounting to date of Russia's complex effort to sow doubt and create chaos in the months leading up to our last election.

The resolution also reaffirms the intelligence community's assessment of Russian interference and asserts that Russia must be held to account for its actions. This can be accomplished in part by immediately and responsibly implementing sanctions provided for in the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA, which this body passed 98 to 2 this summer.

Finally, following the President's summit with Putin in Helsinki, today's resolution calls for prompt hearings and the release of notes to better understand what the two leaders discussed and may have agreed to during their one-on-one meeting, which ran for over 2 hours.

I am encouraged by hearings that have already been scheduled, but I think it is important that it be clear that our Senate seeks a role in engagement and oversight.

Congress and the American people deserve to know what promises or concessions may have been made to President Putin, and thorough hearings with senior officials, including Secretary Pompeo, are critical.

This resolution is a first step—a good first step—but we need to be clear-eyed. President Putin of Russia will not stop until we stop him. We know we face continued threats to our elections in 2018 and beyond. Just last week, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats, our former colleague here in the Senate, cautioned that the warning lights are blinking red again on cyber attacks against our Nation. He said:

These actions are persistent, they are pervasive, and they are meant to undermine America's Democracy. Attacks on our country's digital infrastructure [are] made principally by Russia.

He said:

Russia is the most aggressive foreign actor and the worst offender.

So we know that we continue to face hostile threats. FBI Director Chris Wray said just yesterday: "Russia is still working to sow division in the United States and continues to engage in malign actions against our country."