

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."

So we need to join arms and look forward to protecting our next election. Today's resolution is an important first step, but I think we should work together to take up and pass the DETER Act, introduced by Senators RUBIO and VAN HOLLEN, to deter Russia from interfering in our next election.

I think we should take up and consider the Lankford-Klobuchar Secure Elections Act to strengthen election cyber security.

Of course, I would like to see my Special Counsel Independence and Integrity Act taken up as well. We can build on \$380 million invested in election security, grants provided by this Congress to the States back in March to help bolster their election systems against threats.

It is important to remember that Putin and Putin's Russia are attacking other democratic processes throughout Europe. As Americans, as Senators, we need to stand up and fight for our democracy and the rule of law.

I had a memorable conversation with the Ukrainian leader last year, who said to me: If you don't defend your own elections, your own democracy, how can the rest of us count on you to defend ours?

This resolution makes clear that, on a bipartisan basis, we intend to defend our democracy. Russia's attacks on our last elections where attacks on every American—Republicans and Democrats. The threat is great, it is pressing, and it demands that we act.

Today's resolution is a first step and an important one, and I call on my colleagues to join us in supporting it. If there is any Senator who disagrees with this very basic resolution, I look forward to hearing their reasons.

Let me close by thanking my colleague and friend Senator FLAKE, from Arizona, for having taken the initiative and the lead in introducing this important resolution. We may not agree on everything, but we agree on this important principle: We should stand up and be counted in defense of our democracy.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MR. FLAKE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Delaware, Mr. COONS, for helping to get together and working on this resolution and for working with his colleagues.

I hope that we can pass it today. There may be an objection to moving forward. If there is, we will bring it back again and again. This needs to be passed. The Senate needs to speak here.

Mr. President, in his dystopian novel "1984," George Orwell wrote:

The party told you to reject the evidence with your eyes and ears. It was their most final, essential command.

Well, what we saw on air this week in Helsinki was truly an Orwellian moment. What we saw earlier this week in Helsinki is what happens when you wage war on objective reality for nearly 2 solid years, calling real things fake

and fake things real, as if conditioning others to embrace the same confusion. Ultimately, you are rendered unable to tell the difference between the two and are at critical times seemingly rendered incapable of thinking clearly—your mind a hash of conspiracy theory and fragments of old talking points deployed in response to a question no one even asked. Ultimately, you fail to summon reality in the face of a despot in defense of your country.

It wasn't a hard question. An American President was invited by a reporter to denounce the Russian attacks on our elections and, in doing so, to defend the country that he was elected to lead. This should have been not much of a test at all for any American President. Yet it was, and our President failed that test.

The findings of our intelligence community regarding the Russian aggression are not matters of opinion, no matter how powerful and strong Putin's denial. To reject these findings and to reject the excruciatingly specific indictment against the 12 named Russian operatives in deference to the word of a KGB apparatchik is an act of will on the part of the President.

That choice now leaves us contemplating a dark mystery: Why did he do that? What would compel our President to do such a thing?

Those are questions that urgently beg for an answer, and it is our job to find that answer. But what isn't a mystery is that, by choosing to reject objective reality in Helsinki, the President let down the free world by giving aid and comfort to an enemy of democracy. In so doing, he dimmed the light of freedom ever so slightly in our own country. Such is the power that we vest in the Presidency. Such are the consequences when a President does not use that power well.

I can add no further to the extraordinary and thoroughly justified response of my fellow Americans from across the political spectrum to the events in Helsinki, ranging from heartbreak to horror. But I will say that if ever there was a moment to think of not just your party but for the country, this is it. This is not a moment for spin, deflection, justification, circling the wagons, forgetting, moving on to the next news cycle, or for more of Orwell's doublespeak. No, when the American Government offers an onslaught on unreality, it puts the whole world at risk.

That is the lesson of Helsinki. That is the dose of reality that hit hard. We have indulged myths and fabrications and pretended that it wasn't so bad, and our indulgence got us the capitulation in Helsinki.

We in the Senate who have been elected to represent our constituents cannot be enablers of falsehoods. This bipartisan resolution from the Senator from Delaware and me, which we have here today, commends the Department of Justice for its thorough investigation that has led to the indictment of

12 Russian operatives who on behalf of the Russian Government interfered in the 2016 election. It acknowledges that such efforts by the Russian Government to undermine our elections, as confirmed by our own Director of National Intelligence, continue.

Specifically, the Flake-Coons resolution rejects the denial of election interference by Russian President Vladimir Putin, something that our President failed to do when given the opportunity in a public forum in Helsinki on Monday.

This resolution calls for the full and immediate implementation of mandatory sanctions, passed by a vote of 98 to 2, to deter and punish election interference by the Russian Government.

If there are waivers that are needed—and there are some needed for the Indian Government, for example, for weapons they purchased from the Russian Government or for hardware—there is a waiver process already in law for that, and I would support that.

Finally, the resolution calls on the relevant committees of the Senate to exercise oversight, including prompt hearings and obtaining relevant notes and information to understand what commitments were made by the President in the summit and the impact it will have on our foreign policy going forward.

The Russian Ambassador last night said that "important verbal agreements were made." We need to know the details of those agreements.

Empirical, objective truth has taken a beating for the last 18 months. I said from this pulpit in January that "the dissemination of untruths has the effect of eroding trust in our vital institutions and conditioning the public to no longer trust them."

As we saw in Helsinki on Monday, entertaining the untruths of a dictator has the same effect. Passing this resolution will let our constituents, the administration, our allies, and our adversaries know that here in the Senate we do not entertain the deceit of dictators.

The truth is that Russia interfered in our elections in 2016, and these efforts continue. Accepting that truth is the first step in preparing us to confront this malign activity. Let's pass this resolution.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 583, submitted earlier today. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table with no intervening action or debate.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me first thank the Senator from Arizona and

the Senator from Delaware for expressing all of our concern about Russian interference in the 2016 election. It is absolutely clear they did, and the President has said as much on a number of occasions.

Now, I agree, in Helsinki he was less than clear about that, but he came back and said that he misspoke and reaffirmed his earlier position that, yes, the Russian Government had attempted to interfere in the election, although nobody disputes the fact that they were unsuccessful in changing a single vote or affecting the outcome. Ironically, the very same investigation which has made clear that the Russians did attempt to disrupt the election has also made clear there is no evidence of collusion that anybody has uncovered to date.

My concern with this resolution is that it is purely a symbolic act, and what we need to do is not just offer symbolic resolutions on the floor. We need to do the hard work Senators have to do through regular order. In other words, our committees that have jurisdiction over these issues ought to be permitted to call the witnesses and ask the hard questions and develop the record before we go on record as to a resolution like this.

I would point out that the indictments that were referred to, apparently, according to published reports, Rod Rosenstein, the Deputy Attorney General, asked the President before Helsinki if he should withhold the announcement of those indictments or go ahead and release them before the summit. The President said: No, go ahead.

Anybody who read the 29 pages of the indictment, issued at the request of Robert Mueller by a grand jury in the District of Columbia, knows there is chapter and verse of how Russians attempted to interfere with the election. It is a good and important read. The President knew that before he went to Helsinki. That gives me some confidence that he did, indeed, misspeak, especially in light of his subsequent affirmations of Russian interference in the election.

I happen to be privileged to sit on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. We have been conducting a bipartisan investigation of the Russian matter for the entire time the President has been in office for the last year and a half. We already issued some preliminary reports. The way to do our work is through bipartisan committee work—have the witnesses come and testify, ask them hard questions, and render our judgment.

I know Secretary Pompeo is coming before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee sometime next week. He ought to be asked hard questions. I am confident he will respond to those questions. That is how we get the information we need.

Let me just say that I think we should consider sanctions—not some sort of sense-of-the-Senate resolutions that have no sting or no impact, cer-

tainly no deterrent effect on what we all want, which is to discourage Russian involvement in our 2018 elections. That is why the majority leader today asked the chairman of the Banking and Foreign Relations Committee to hold hearings and recommend additional measures that could respond to or deter Russian malign behavior. We ought to do our work through our committees of jurisdiction.

When we rush to judgment and do resolutions like this, we can inadvertently make mistakes. Let me point out one that is in this resolution. There is a reference to Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which passed the Senate 98 to 2, to deter and punish election interference by the Russian Federation. There is a provision in the current conference committee on the Defense authorization that would issue a waiver of that act to our partner India. If we want to encourage countries like India to come partner with the United States of America—the world's largest democracy and the world's oldest democracy—then we ought encourage that movement toward us and away from the Russian Federation. I worry there is no reference in here to the waiver provision in the Defense authorization conference committee that India has asked for and that Secretary Mattis has requested Congress grant.

All I am asking for is a little bit of caution in the rush to issue a resolution. No. 1, I don't think we acknowledge the full picture, but we also don't commit our work to the committees that have jurisdiction over these matters to do it carefully, thoughtfully, and in a bipartisan way so we come up to the best solution to the problem.

I think this is the wrong way to go about it. I think our committees ought to continue to do their work—Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, the Armed Services Committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, and the Banking Committee. We ought to come up with the right kind of bipartisan answer, which I think could well include sanctions against the Russian Federation to deter them from meddling in our 2018 elections and beyond. I am confident they will continue until we stop them from doing so.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I think it is regrettable this was objected to. We will bring it back. The majority leader said this is just a symbolic vote. It is. Symbolism is important.

Obviously, we have underlying sanctions we ought to fully implement. If there are waivers needed, there is already a waiver process in the NDAA authorization. I support those waivers with regard to India. This does not affect that. This says, in a symbolic way, that we in the Senate don't buy Vladimir Putin's rejection or his denial of election interference.

That was put in question this week, whether our government believes that or not. We in the Senate should stand and say: We don't believe it. We know the intelligence is right. We stand behind our intelligence community. We need to say that in the Senate.

Yes, it is symbolic and symbolism is important. Our agencies of government need to know that we stand behind them. That is what this is about.

I hope we will pass this. I note, regretfully, that there has been an objection to it, but we will bring it back. I believe this should pass, and I believe it ultimately will pass.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding Senate rule XXII, postcloture time on the Bounds nomination expire at 1:45 p.m. today; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. RES. 584

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following disposition of the Bounds nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and proceed to the immediate consideration of a Schumer resolution that is at the desk; further, that the Senate immediately vote on the resolution; that if agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

S. RES. 583

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I join my colleague from Arizona in briefly remarking on my regret that our resolution was not adopted today.

It does call for the full implementation of mandatory sanctions as discussed at some length. It does not call for the reckless implementation of mandatory sanctions.

There is a significant range of sanctions already provided for in this law, adopted 98 to 2 by this body, that have not yet been adopted. I recognize that this resolution, standing strong behind the Department of Justice, the intelligence community, and its ongoing investigation is, as was referenced, a symbolic act, but there are moments when symbolism and standing together are important.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with my colleague and friend from Arizona to ensure that this resolution is adopted, that the American people and the men and women of our Federal law enforcement agencies and our intelligence community understand that this body strongly supports them and their work and sees clearly the ongoing and continuing threat to