

2011, and Russia has prolonged and exacerbated the Syrian people's suffering for its own power projection.

No. 4, Russia is also developing a stronger relationship with the Iranian regime and is reportedly considering arms sales and boosting their economic relationship. This threatens not only our national security interests in the Middle East but also those security interests of our staunchest ally, Israel.

Finally, Russia continues to have a substantial nuclear arsenal. It has violated the INF Treaty, and according to the Defense Department, is developing low-yield, nonstrategic nuclear weapons that could threaten our allies and partners.

Russia uses any number of tools, from manipulation of the energy supply to arms sales, to loans and aid to promote its brand of corrupt authoritarian governance around the world. It also employs nefarious means like hacking, espionage, and sowing false information to meddle in the most fundamental parts of our great democracy—our elections and, of course, those of other countries.

I don't think it is wrong for a United States President to meet with a hostile foreign leader. That is part of the job.

What is dead wrong is to sit across from a hostile foreign leader, one on one, with no notes, no staff, and to fail completely—completely—at your core mission, your job, which is protecting the national security interests of the American people.

To many people, it might seem odd to be focused on who was or wasn't in the room or whether any notes were taken, but without them, there is absolutely no accountability for what was said. We hear that the Russian military—let me say that again—the Russian military is ready to start implementing the agreements reached between President Trump and Vladimir Putin in that room.

We have to ask the President of the United States, what agreements? What did you agree to in that room? What did the leader of our Nation agree to that the Russian military is so eager to start implementing?

Further, there seems to have been some discussion between President Trump and Vladimir Putin about the Russian Government's interest in interrogating U.S. citizens, like former Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul. Yesterday, we heard the White House say the President was giving that absurd proposal serious consideration. Of course Putin wants to question Ambassador McFaul. He is an expert on Russia who served our country honorably as Ambassador and as a public servant. He stood up to Russian aggression and promoted U.S. national security interests, especially when they contradicted Moscow's agenda.

The idea that we would entertain handing over an American citizen to an authoritarian Russian Government with no rule of law and no history of treating people fairly—and, of course,

with a history of interrogating and torturing political opponents—that is not only insulting to our values, it is dangerous and it is wrong. That is not America. No official in our government—of any branch of government—should support that. If the administration tries it, the Congress should take every effort to stop them from doing that.

The Russian threat is serious and persistent. It isn't solved by one meeting and a press conference. It will take sustained commitment from the national security professionals across our government, and it will take real vision and leadership from the President and his Cabinet. I do not object to meeting with an adversary, nor does anyone. That is part of the job of being President. Instead, what I am concerned about, what a lot of Americans are concerned about, is this President's conduct during and after that meeting, especially his unwillingness to say without reservation or caveat that Russia was responsible for hacking our elections in 2016 and continues to meddle in our democratic process. This isn't a political judgment; it is the judgment of our intelligence and law enforcement experts, and it led to the indictment of 12 Russian military intelligence hackers this past Friday.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats reaffirmed this judgment just this week, saying:

The role of the Intelligence Community is to provide the best information and fact-based assessments possible for the President and policymakers. We have been clear in our assessments of Russian meddling in the 2016 election and their ongoing, pervasive efforts to undermine our democracy, and we will continue to provide unvarnished and objective intelligence in support of our national security.

So said the Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats.

Why can't the President say this and say it repeatedly, that he agrees with their assessment and is working to stop Russia from doing it again?

My constituents, like so many Americans, were right to ask: Where do we go from here? There is no playbook for this scenario.

I believe we must act in a bipartisan fashion to make clear to Russia that the U.S. Congress will not stand for continued interference in our elections and will work to counter them on other fronts.

First, we should enact new legislation to levy sanctions on Russian entities responsible for this malicious behavior and demand the administration fully implement legislation that was passed with an overwhelming bipartisan majority last year. No. 2, we must pass legislation to protect the special counsel and to shine a bright light on the dark money in politics. No. 3, we must fully fund State and municipal efforts to shore up our electoral systems. No. 4, we must speak out in support of our alliances. Many of our closest international partners are right on the frontlines of Russia's desta-

bilizing actions. Finally, we should insist that the administration answer the questions so many of us have about what happened in that room in Helsinki and what they plan to do to counter Russia and protect our national security interests.

We are in uncharted waters in terms of the actions of the President. His actions the last 2 weeks have made us less safe. I will say it again—less safe. He must take decisive action to guarantee our security by confronting malign Russian aggression against the United States and our NATO allies and partners. At the same time, Congress, both parties, both Houses, must act to protect our security and make it clear to the President that this branch of government will continue to discharge its constitutional duties.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Thank you, Mr. President.

I would like to acknowledge that the Senator from Pennsylvania has made a number of good points on the subject of Russia and the way we need to go with Russia.

People have asked me about what I think about Mr. Putin and whether he is trustworthy, and I tell them no. The way that I know he is misleading the public on the issues of meddling is because his lips are moving. He is not just telling the truth. Any time he talks about it, it just flies in the face of Federal investigations, oversight hearings, and classified briefings we have been involved in. I think it is an example of where Members of Congress have really come together on an issue. KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER AND ENFORCE THE LAW ACT

Mr. President, now I would like to talk about another issue that I would like Members of Congress to come together on, and it is called the Keeping Families Together and Enforce the Law Act.

You have heard a lot of reports recently about children being separated from their families at the border, and the administration has taken a position, in part prompted by lawsuits, and we can debate whether the administration should fix this problem through an Executive order, but how about this.

Why doesn't Congress act to provide long-term certainty through an act of Congress to make absolutely certain that children who cross the border with their families can be kept with their families while we are trying to determine in a court whether that family has a legitimate claim to asylum?

It sounds fairly simple. In fact, it is pretty simple. I met with Senators FEINSTEIN, Senator DURBIN, and Senator CRUZ. We sat down, and we discussed a way to actually get this into law. We all agreed it needs to be very narrowly focused.

The problem with immigration around here and the immigration subject is it gets really big and really complex really quickly. What happens with

big and complex on Capitol Hill is nothing gets done.

So the bill we propose is very simple. Fix the issues in the law, clarify the process so we can actually make absolutely certain that minor children can stay with their parents while their asylum claims are being considered.

We have had agreement on virtually everything. We have agreed that families should be kept together. We have agreed that we need more judges so we can reduce the backlog. We agreed we need more attorneys to participate in the process—basically a 2-to-1 ratio between a new judge and new attorneys to support the legal process. We agreed on minimum standards for housing so we make sure we are keeping these families in a place that we think are appropriate.

Some people may come to the floor and say we are going to stand up tent cities and subject people to harsh conditions. We don't want to do that. As a matter of fact, we feel so strongly about it that we are putting forth specific requirements for housing. So we are addressing the judge constraint, we are addressing the lawyer constraint, we are addressing specific standards for keeping families together.

We can actually pass this in a heartbeat. We can do it on the Senate floor, and we can do it through what is called unanimous consent. Allow somebody to come down here, put a bill forward, and get it passed. Give those children and parents certainty.

The fact is, some of them are going to apply for asylum and will not have a legitimate case. Others will, but we have proposed a bill that will prevent any sort of lengthy detention. As a matter of fact, if this bill gets passed, the average case with a family would be prioritized. If you have an asylum request and you are with children, we want to keep you together and get it at the front of the docket so you can get certainty fairly quickly—over 40 to 60 days, but we have a constraint we have to get past. It has to do with a court ruling called the Flores case, where if we don't narrowly tailor the language to say, if a child—if a minor comes across the border with their parents, then they will be allowed to be kept with their parents in appropriate housing until such time as their asylum request has been heard before a court of law. It is not getting rid of Flores. You have some people here saying we want to completely eliminate the case. That is not the case.

We don't want children coming across the border who don't have parents with them to be retained in perpetuity or indefinite detention, as it is referred to down there. That is what Flores does. So if a child comes across the border, and they don't have a parent with them, then after 20 days, they have to be placed somewhere other than detention. That is a good policy.

If you have a situation where Flores stands the way that it is, then the law specifically requires the child to be

separated from the parents. This gives the parents the choice. If they want the children with them while they are going through the legal process, then they can have that. If they choose to have the child placed with a family member or a guardian, then they can have that too.

One of the things that I think we have to talk more about is the danger of just randomly placing children with a parent or guardian who comes across the border. We have several cases where in our system there is no way we would place the child with some of the people they are coming across the border with. They have been convicted for a variety of things: child neglect, child abuse, drug trafficking. All sorts of things that would have an American citizen's child removed from their family are the same sort of standards we want for a child coming across the border. Of course, we want to make sure the parent who says they are their parent or guardian really is.

So in this body, there are few opportunities where you can narrowly tailor a policy to a point to where only the most partisan or unreasonable person wouldn't support it. This is one of them. We can get this bill passed, sent to the President's desk, and provide certainty—a compassionate, appropriate method for dealing with what are now hundreds of thousands of people who have come across the border—to children with their parents. Treat them fairly, treat them justly, and have them processed in what I believe is the greatest judicial system that has ever existed.

It is on us to solve this problem. Anybody who comes down here and says, well, no, I have to talk about DACA, which is something I support, a path to citizenship or I want to talk about border security, which I also support—yes, let's talk about that, but let's not hold these children and these families hostage for other immigration matters. This body should have the backbone to deal with the political challenges that may come from their own party and do the right thing—the next time.

This time, let's solve the separation of children from their parents. Let's stop playing the political games that make for great fodder, but they are not compassionate, they are not a part of the solution. I hope we have enough Members to become a part of the solution. Next week, we will be talking more about this and possibly through unanimous consent.

I want somebody to come down to this floor and explain to me why it is a bad idea. I want them to explain it to the American people, but, out of respect for the Senate, we will not offer a unanimous consent request today, but you can be pretty sure we will next week.

I yield the floor.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. PERDUE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the Bounds nomination be vitiated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. For the information of all Senators, the nomination will be withdrawn.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 584 as under the previous order and that I then be permitted to speak briefly about it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE AGAINST THE MAKING AVAILABLE OF CURRENT AND FORMER DIPLOMATS, OFFICIALS, AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES FOR QUESTIONING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF VLADIMIR PUTIN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session to consider the following resolution, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 584) expressing the sense of the Senate against the making available of current and former diplomats, officials, and members of the Armed Forces of the United States for questioning by the government of Vladimir Putin.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I am hopeful that we will come together on this resolution, which I introduced with the Senator from New Jersey and the Senator from Hawaii, that it is neither the policy nor the practice of the United States to submit our citizens, let alone our Ambassadors, to the interrogation of a foreign adversary.

Let this resolution be a warning to the administration that Congress will not allow this to happen. I call on President Trump to say once and for