

A fifth would be serious investigations by Congress—not tiptoe investigations but ones where we take hard looks, ask hard questions, and demand hard evidence.

No one in the Senate has tangled more with Vladimir Putin than our friend JOHN MCCAIN. Senator MCCAIN has tangled with him so often that he has actually been blacklisted from travel to Russia. What Senator MCCAIN said last week is something we should take to heart: “The latest attacks against the FBI and Department of Justice serve no American interests—no party’s, no President’s, only Vladimir Putin’s.”

He also said this: “Our Nation’s elected officials, including the President, must stop looking at this investigation through the lens of politics and manufacturing political sideshows.” Instead, we need to be looking at the situation through the lens of our national security.

Here is what America’s national security professionals tell us. First, they concluded: “Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election.”

I will continue. “Russia’s goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. Democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency.”

They concluded: “We further assess Putin and the Russian government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.”

We went on with this important conclusion in the January 2017 intelligence community assessment: “We assess Moscow will apply lessons learned from its Putin-ordered campaign aimed at the U.S. presidential election to future influence efforts worldwide, including against U.S. allies and their election processes.”

We know they are coming. We have been warned by Trump’s own appointees that they are coming. Yet we do nothing. Nada. As Putin would say, “nichego.”

Well, right now that leaves Congress complicit, but it doesn’t have to be this way, and it ought not be this way. It is not too late to defend our democracy and to teach Russia and the world some different lessons about who we are. What are the things we could do? Well, we could defend our democracy from Russian political influence.

Let’s take legislative action to secure election infrastructure, improve our cyber security, counter and blunt Russian propaganda, and keep foreign money out of our politics. That ought not to be too hard to ask.

Let’s defend our democracy from future Russian and foreign meddling. Let’s insist on the implementation and enforcement of the sanctions against Russia. We passed them 98 to 2 for a reason. Why is President Trump sheltering Putin and the oligarchs from that punch? Let’s insist on the message being delivered that we don’t tolerate

this behavior and that we will deter it with serious sanctions.

Let’s insist on transparency. Let’s insist on transparency about foreign financial interference in our country, through shell corporations in particular, and let’s insist on transparency about the President’s foreign financial dealings and conflicts of interest.

Finally, let’s pass legislation to protect the special counsel from interference and obstruction. I have been a U.S. attorney. I understand the role of an independent and honorable Department of Justice. I understand, as we all should, that no man—not even the President—is above the law. And like many colleagues who have served in the Department of Justice, I expect, as they all expect, that even under the pressure, the threats, and the intimidation brought by the President against this Department of Justice, it will do its job. As FBI Director Christopher Wray recently said, “We expect them to keep calm and tackle hard.”

I see the majority leader is on the floor.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I was unavoidably absent due to a family medical emergency for rollcall vote No. 28. Had I been present, I would have voted yea on the confirmation of Andrei Iancu, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

CONFIRMATION OF DAVID RYAN STRAS

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, today I wish to express my disappointment that David Stras was confirmed to serve on the Eight Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Stras’s nomination should not have made it to the Senate floor. For over a century, the Senate Judiciary Committee has used the blue slip process to ensure that the White House fulfills its constitutional duty to seek the Senate’s advice and consent for judicial nominations. Traditionally, a nominee received a committee hearing only if both of their home State Senators returned their blue slips to the committee. Despite receiving only one blue slip, Mr. Stras was granted a hearing, and his nomination was sent to the

Senate floor for a vote. I am extremely disappointed that my colleagues are abandoning long-standing practices in order to fill the judiciary with conservative ideologues.

Moreover, Mr. Stras is yet another judicial nominee selected for this administration by the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society. His name was on President Trump’s Supreme Court shortlist, and although he was not selected to fill the Supreme Court vacancy, outside dark money PACS spent millions of dollars running ads in support of his nomination to this seat. These facts should alarm every American. Our judiciary system, under the Trump administration, is being outsourced to outside organizations with unlimited financial resources that are not accountable to voters.

I urge my colleagues to return to regular order.

OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS DRILLING

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to speak in opposition to President Trump’s proposal to open all offshore waters in the country to oil drilling.

This proposal has been met with outrage from every corner, as my colleagues are making clear here on the Senate floor today.

I would like to take a minute to remind everyone of what is at stake.

Before the Deepwater Horizon and Exxon Valdez spills, Santa Barbara, CA, experienced the worst oil spill in U.S. history.

In 1969, an offshore oil rig in Federal waters spilled more than 3 million gallons of crude oil into the Pacific Ocean.

The environmental disaster killed thousands of marine mammals and birds. Our local beaches were coated by a thick layer of oil. Tourists were turned away, and commercial fishing operations were shut down, hurting the local economy.

After that spill, California decided that enough was enough. State agencies blocked all new offshore oil drilling in State waters up to 3 miles from the shore. The State reinforced this ban with the California Coastal Sanctuary Act in 1994.

Through a combination of local ordinances, congressional opposition, and moratoria imposed by Presidents from both parties, our State has also fought off any new drilling in Federal waters beyond 3 miles from the shore since 1984.

The Trump administration has now proposed undoing our progress by opening all Federal waters, including the waters off California’s coast, to new gas and oil drilling.

If his proposal is allowed to go through, it would lead to the first new offshore oil drilling leases sold in the Pacific Ocean in more than 30 years.

So far, an exception has been made for Florida, hastily announced by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in response

to concerns from Florida's Republican Governor.

That is completely arbitrary and not acceptable.

It is clear California also staunchly opposes this plan. According to the latest polling, nearly 70 percent of Californians oppose new drilling off our coast.

Senator HARRIS and I, together with our colleagues in the House of Representatives, have repeatedly shared our concerns with Secretary Zinke.

The Secretary has even received statements of opposition from California's Governor, senate, assembly, attorney general, coastal commission, fish and game commission, State lands commission, and more than two dozen counties and cities.

So why are we not being given the same deference as Florida?

Unlike this administration, California understands that offshore oil drilling belongs in the past. We are making smarter investments in clean energy and renewable sources. Our State is on target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by the year 2050.

The President's proposal would undermine that progress.

The Trump administration's proposed six new lease sales off the California coast would lead to new oil rigs that would continue to produce oil for decades to come.

That is well past the time we will need to have moved away from fossil fuels altogether.

Even though California has fought off new Federal drilling for three decades, there are still 43 leases that remain active from Federal lease sales prior to 1984.

In State waters, there are still nine active rigs that were built before the Santa Barbara oil spill.

We are still dealing with the legacy of last century's drilling, but it is our responsibility to leave a better legacy for the next century.

California won't allow new offshore oil rigs to create another generation of dirty carbon emissions and disastrous oil spills.

California, along with our coastal State friends, has rejected President Trump's offshore drilling proposal.

It is time to respect our local opposition and completely scrap this plan.

KARI'S LAW ACT

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Senate passage of Kari's Law Act of 2017.

In December 2013, Kari Hunt Dunn was attacked by her estranged husband in a hotel room. In an attempt to help her mother, Kari's 9-year-old daughter tried to contact the police by dialing 9-1-1. Tragically, the call failed to go through because Kari's daughter did not dial "9" to reach an outside line before entering 9-1-1. Kari did not survive the attack.

Kari's murder brought a serious public safety problem to light. Whether

you are a worker at a big office building or a family staying in a hotel, dialing 9-1-1 should always connect you with people who can help.

By passing Kari's Law, we will enact a national standard to ensure that multiline telephone equipment must be capable of supporting the ability to directly reach emergency services by dialing 9-1-1 and that those responsible for installing, maintaining, and operating the system are required to ensure that simply dialing 9-1-1, a critically important capability, is available for use in emergency situations.

Ensuring multiline telephones are installed with the capability to contact emergency responders by dialing 9-1-1 will help prevent tragedies like the one that Kari Hunt Dunn endured.

RECOGNIZING THE COMMISSIONING OF THE USCGC "JOSEPH GERCZAK"

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the commissioning of the Coast Guard's 26th Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter, FRC, the USCGC *Joseph Gerczak*. The commissioning ceremony for this impressive ship will take place in Honolulu, HI, on March 9. Although I regret not being able to attend the ceremony in person, I am deeply honored for the chance to speak about this cutter and the remarkable man for which it is named.

Joseph Gerczak, a son of Pennsylvania, valiantly died fighting for his country during World War II. He was born on February 10, 1922, in Philadelphia, PA. Soon after enlisting in the Coast Guard on September 26, 1942, he was assigned to a tank landing ship whose job it was to carry tanks, vehicles, cargo, and troops directly onto enemy shores. Gerczak was quickly promoted to signalman third class on this ship, which was called the USS *LST-66*.

On December 26, 1943, Gerczak and his crewmates participated in the initial Allied assault on the Japanese-held island of New Britain. During this operation, the USS *LST-66* came under sudden attack by seven Japanese dive bombers. Acting without hesitation, Gerczak was the first crewmember to man his battle station; he heroically shot down two Japanese planes before being mortally wounded from the shrapnel of a bomb blast. He was 21 years old.

For his valor in battle, Gerczak was posthumously awarded both the Silver Star and Purple Heart. The USS *LST-66*'s entire crew was also given the Presidential Unit Commendation. It is exceptionally fitting that Gerczak be honored for the sacrifice he gave during World War II by having his name live on in the service of the U.S. Coast Guard.

The USCGC *Joseph Gerczak* will be the second FRC based in Honolulu, HI, replacing the legacy Island-class patrol boats. As a Sentinel-class cutter, it will feature advanced command, con-

trol, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance—C4ISR—equipment. Furthermore, this ship will be fully interoperable with existing and future Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Defense assets. These state-of-the-art capabilities will better enable the USCGC *Joseph Gerczak* to conduct missions that include port, waterways, and the coasts; fishery patrols; search and rescue; and national defense.

I ask my colleagues to join me in recognition of the commissioning of the USCGC *Joseph Gerczak* into military service as a Coast Guard ship.

TRIBUTE TO KERRY SUTTEN

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the dedicated career and service to the Congress and the intelligence community of Kerry Suttén, who is retiring at the end of this month after more than 20 years of service in both the executive and legislative branches of our government. Kerry dedicated his professional career to help keep our Nation safe and to improve our government and intelligence community. We thank him for his dedication.

Kerry is leaving the Senate as the deputy minority staff director of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, a post he has held for the last 2½ years. He first joined the committee as the head of the committee's collection review, a study looking at the intelligence activities of all the IC. During his time on the committee, Kerry has worked tirelessly to help the committee rigorously oversee the 17 intelligence agencies that make up our national intelligence community and has especially dedicated himself to improving the oversight of the IC's inspectors general and to the protection of IC whistleblowers. His efforts in these subjects have been invaluable.

Prior to joining the committee, Kerry served in a variety of roles in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), including spending almost 5 years as the lead for intelligence community strategic planning in the Office of Systems and Resource Analysis, (SRA). In that capacity, Kerry was responsible for helping provide resource direction for the entirety of the IC, developing integrated planning guidance for the various intelligence programs, and managing the development of strategic priorities.

In addition to his time in SRA, Kerry held important roles in the Business Transformation Office at ODNI and the Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Kerry was also instrumental in helping to create the national counterterrorism budget, a key accomplishment in his time at the National Counterterrorism Center, (NCTC), where he served for almost 2 years as a Senior Program and Resource Officer. Prior to joining the IC, Mr. Suttén spent almost 5 years supporting the Director of the Bureau