

The American withdrawal worries Israel, anxious about Iran's robust military presence in Syria, and Jordan, which bears a considerable burden from Syrian refugees who fled the fighting across the border. While Israel withheld criticism of Mr. Trump's decision, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government would escalate the fight against Iranian-aligned forces in Syria once the Americans leave.

Decisions of such consequence normally are thoroughly vetted by a president's national security advisers. But congressional lawmakers said there were no signs that any process was followed, and a senior White House official, refusing to discuss internal deliberations, said Wednesday, "The issue here is the president made a decision."

Judging from the timing and tone of Mr. Mattis' letter of resignation, the president made that decision alone.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES MATTIS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, like so many Republicans and Democrats, I was stunned to hear that Secretary Mattis was going to be leaving.

I understand his reasons. He has said he always felt a duty to uphold the interests and security of the United States and to uphold our agreements with other countries for the security of democracy. The President has disagreed with him on that. He feels otherwise. So Secretary Mattis feels the President should be entitled to have somebody who takes differing views.

Unfortunately, General Mattis's views are those that are the result of decades of service to this country as a marine in combat, as a marine commander, as a four-star general, and as one who has the strong respect of Republicans and Democrats alike. Certainly, he has the strong respect of those who have served in the military and who know what it means to actually stand up for this country, not just in rhetoric but by putting their lives on the line on the battlefield.

I will always admire General Mattis. I applaud his service to the United States of America, and I know he is a man who can leave with his head held high.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FLATSIDE WILDERNESS ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Agriculture Committee be discharged and the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5636.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5636) to designate additions to the Flatside Wilderness on the Ouachita National Forest, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 5636) was passed.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

REAUTHORIZING THE NEW JERSEY COASTAL HERITAGE TRAIL ROUTE

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 6602.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6602) to reauthorize the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time.

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

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I know of no further debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The bill (H.R. 6602) was passed.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

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

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

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. PERDUE. Mr. President, here we are at approximately 2:30 on a Saturday afternoon trying to do the people's business in a situation that nobody wanted. Yet because, I believe, of political self-interest, we are in a situation right now where we are in what I would call a crisis mode of operation.

We need to get a deal done. But I want to address a couple of topics today that are at issue here as we debate the funding issue, which is at the crux of why we are here today and this weekend.

Our country was built on immigration; there is just no question that we are all direct derivatives, in one way or the other. But I would like to be very clear that most of the people who have come to this country over the last two centuries came in legally. Today, we bring in 1.1 million people a year—legally. We bring in about 70,000 people who have a job-related way to get into our system. There are about 70,000 direct family members; that is, a spouse and immediate children. There are another 300,000 refugees and asylum seekers. There is a rational reason we should do that, and we have been doing that.

Today, every day, asylum seekers and refugees are permitted into our country, but there are another 800,000 who come in legally every year, and the only reason they come in is that they have an indirect family link, through generations, to the 70,000 that come in. Given that environment, we also have a temporary work permit system here that, again, has over 1 million people in it—every year.

Our country is the most welcoming, philanthropic country in the history of the world. To think that just protecting our borders as a national security issue is somehow hard-hearted and radical—no country in the history of the world has ever demonstrated that it was a radical thought to maintain and protect the sovereignty of their own country and their own borders.

Indeed, there are only 6 reasons why 13 colonies came together in the first place in the late 18th century and formed the United States of America. The No. 1 reason articulated is to provide for the common defense of our country.

President Trump is leading right now in his first responsibility, and that is to protect every citizen of the United States of America. He is fighting for the American people. Actually, that is how he got elected. He got elected because he complained about the dysfunction in Washington, about politicians, bureaucrats, and the media. So did I, in 2014—2 years before President Trump did. I believe people are fed up with this dysfunction in Washington.

I want to reemphasize that what is at issue here is the protection of our sovereignty as a country—not to change the immigration laws; that is not what is at debate today.

I want to remind everybody that just in this body this year, 43 of my colleagues across the aisle, in an immigration bill proposed by SUSAN COLLINS on this side, 43 Democrats voted for a \$25 billion border security package—43. I think President Trump has demonstrated tremendous negotiating willingness over and over, over this past year, on this issue.

Let's be clear what is going on. The flow of drugs and human trafficking on our border are completely unacceptable. Everybody in this body agrees with that, demonstrated by the fact that 43 Democrats actually voted for a \$25 billion border security package earlier this year. There is no way you can avoid admitting that. This has to stop.

The undampened flow of illegal drugs has created a crisis in our country. The fact that we sit here and are more concerned about the political realities in Washington than we are about stopping human trafficking across our southern border is totally unacceptable. An open border goes against the very ideas of why our country was founded. It totally undercuts American sovereignty. The American people know that. They are fed up with the status quo, and I can tell you, firsthand, so is President Donald Trump.

The Dems are very clear. My colleagues have demonstrated that they prefer open borders, illegal drug transfers, and human trafficking to a commonsense protection of our southern border.

We know fences work. I have been to countries around the world where they are protecting their borders with simple fences where they need them.

We have multiple approaches to defending our southern border. We have many miles right now that already have similar fences up that deter illegal crossings.

At the same time, this President has shown over and over again that he will work with our colleagues across the aisle to find some common solution here that we can all live with. He is ready to make a deal today. In fact, as we speak, the Vice President, the President, and the Chief of Staff are in the White House right now; the leader of the Democratic Party in the Senate is, right now, negotiating.

This needs to get done. I have done dozens of these in my career, and looking at what is important to both parties, there is no reason this can't get done.

I believe the President is ready to make a deal to fully fund the Federal Government—the last 25 percent. Let's remember how we got there. This body, the Senate and the House, did something they haven't done in 22 years, and that is fund at least 75 percent of our Federal Government on time. That was by September 30. We are here, at the end of our first quarter of the next fiscal year, still trying to fund the last 25 percent because of this controversy over the border wall.

The first number was \$25 billion, as I said, which was agreed to by the other side. Then, there was another \$5 billion offered. Lastly, the President, I thought, had a deal earlier this week with our colleagues across the aisle for \$1.6 billion. That deal was taken away.

We are right now, I think, experiencing the second Schumer shutdown of this year. The first was over the DACA controversy. President Trump

took the Democratic request for 600,000 work permits for an indefinite period of time and changed that and made an offer of a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million DACA recipients. He took a chance with the ultraright in our party, the conservative part of the party. He took a chance and stood up and said: This is the right thing to do, if it is paired with the right deal on the other side.

I believe there is no reason we can't get this package done right now. I think the President agrees with that. I think the Democratic leader agrees with that. But prior to yesterday, for a few days, there was no one talking.

I give Mick Mulvaney and the Vice President a lot of credit. I know that the Vice President was in this building until about 9:30 last night negotiating this. I just believe it is time to get this done.

NANCY PELOSI, in the House, repeatedly said that President Trump couldn't get the votes from the House to pass a funding package that included these border security priorities. We now know she was wrong. The votes were there. The House has sent a bill back over here that not only has border security but a relief package—a serious relief package for hurricane victims, disaster relief victims, and the wildfire victims in California.

The U.S. Senate should have included President Trump's priorities from the very beginning. Now this body has a chance to do the right thing.

It is time to get this done. We are here. Let's get a deal, bring it back in here, pass it, get it back to the House, and let's stop this nonsense. Let's not yield to political self-interest on either side.

I implore all of us who have influence with the people who are negotiating this: Let's get beyond this. This is so close. There is no reason we are sitting here, letting America be nervous about whether we are going to get this done. This should have been done back in September, as I said earlier. Now let's focus on our national interests, the things we are all called to do in our oath of office: Protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. Let's fully fund this government—the last 25 percent—move past this, secure our border, and provide disaster relief for the people who have a timely need, right now, for us to do that.

I yield the floor.

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. 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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar Nos. 1204, 1206 through 1215, and 1228 through 1232; that the nominations be confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. David W. Abba
Col. Christopher R. Amrhein
Col. Charles D. Bolton
Col. Larry R. Broadwell, Jr.
Col. Terry L. Bullard
Col. Scott A. Cain
Col. Jimmy R. Canlas
Col. Julian C. Cheater
Col. Roy W. Collins
Col. Colin J. Connor
Col. Donald J. Cothorn
Col. David S. Eaglin
Col. Steven G. Edwards
Col. Troy L. Endicott
Col. Gregory J. Gagnon
Col. Richard W. Gibbs
Col. Jennifer L. Grant
Col. Stewart A. Hammons
Col. Robert S. Jobe
Col. John M. Klein, Jr.
Col. Gregory Kreuder
Col. Benjamin R. Maitre
Col. Matteo G. Martemucci
Col. Caroline M. Miller
Col. David A. Mineau
Col. Paul J. Murray
Col. Ty W. Neuman
Col. John P. Newberry
Col. Jefferson J. O'Donnell
Col. Thomas B. Palenske
Col. Evan L. Pettus
Col. Christopher S. Povak
Col. Bradley L. Pyburn
Col. Chad D. Raduege
Col. Michael T. Rawls
Col. Ryan R. Samuelson
Col. David J. Sanford
Col. David G. Shoemaker
Col. Rebecca J. Sonkiss
Col. Claude K. Tudor, Jr.
Col. Daniel H. Tulley
Col. Jeffery D. Valenzia
Col. John C. Walker
Col. Steven P. Whitney

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps Reserve to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Bradley S. James

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the