

Imagine if this were your home soaking in unsanitary water for days on end. Consider for a moment the damages to your furniture, clothes, appliances, and your most prized possessions. Think how much it would cost to replace those items. Now add up the countless hours of hard work it would take to clean up the mess, mud, muck, and mold once the water finally recedes.

I have another photo here I want you to look at. Let's now turn to a photo taken near Pacific Junction.

I thank Larry Winum of Glenwood, IA, a constituent and a friend, for sharing these photos.

Just think of the small businesses impacted by the floods. The photo here of a motel illustrates how flooding can wash away the livelihoods of business owners and their employees. This particular business will indefinitely have zero occupancy. Even if the roads were open, this business would need a floor-to-ceiling refurbishment to replace beds, linens, carpets, and towels, and most likely even significant plumbing and electrical work.

I want to show a photo of Main Street in Hamburg, IA. This community was hard hit in 2011. I was there in 2011. It is worse now. You can see it is underwater in 2019.

Let's examine how the flooding has affected our farmers. As a lifelong farmer, I know exactly what farmers across my State are feeling at this time of the year. They get very antsy and keep constant watch on the weather, soil temperatures, and planting conditions for their seed. They have ordered seeds and fertilizers. These farmers are chomping at the bit to get started on field work.

Now imagine the farmers along the Missouri River. Tens of thousands of acres of farmland are underwater. For sure, these acres may never be ready for planting this season.

Now consider the farmers who were storing grain in the bins along the Missouri. Millions of bushels of flood-soaked grain have spilled into murky floodwaters.

This picture says it all. This is grain that farmers were counting on to pay the bills to put this year's crop in the ground. This photo was shared courtesy of State Representative David Sieck, whose legislative district is almost completely impacted by the flood damages. I thank David for sharing.

My State staff tells me that some farmers in the flooded areas didn't get last fall's crop fully harvested, and of course that is destroyed.

Since March 12, my staff has been crisscrossing scores of Iowa counties to visit affected communities and meet directly with Iowans. They are sharing directly with me the feedback from Iowans. I am making plans to visit affected areas as soon as I can as well. I am anxious to measure recovery and cleanup efforts to inform my decisions on tax and spending policies that are needed to help with recovery efforts going forward.

As my speech and these photos suggest to all and I hope will suggest to each of my colleagues here in the Senate, we have a long road to recovery from the floods of 2019. In fact, it could be worse. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration issued a wake-up call last week. We are not yet out of the woods—not by a long shot. With more precipitation, snowmelt, saturated soils, frozen ground, and massive ice jams, we are in store for significant spring flooding that may reach 200 million Americans.

Today, I have talked largely about the extent of damages and the recovery efforts that are just getting started. It is also important to talk about flood mitigation. Breached, overtopped, or compromised levees span hundreds of miles on the Missouri River along the States of Iowa, Nebraska, and Missouri.

It took a long time for these communities to recover from flooding that took place 8 years ago. It is no wonder an awful lot of Iowans are feeling like they are way back to square one again.

Iowans, especially those who live along the Missouri River, want and deserve answers. Southwest Iowa communities have raised grave concern about the unresponsive Corps of Engineers—specifically, about the lack of communication and about not enough river dredging, water release, and about ordering the town of Hamburg, back in 2011, to remove reinforcements of the now-breached levee that left the town under water.

I, too, share the concerns that have been expressed to the Corps of Engineers. I have had a chance to talk to the Corps headquarters in Omaha. For years I have worked with several of my midwestern colleagues along the Missouri River to make flood control the No. 1 priority of the Corps.

It seems to me that misguided decisions and misplaced priorities have eclipsed common sense. As I told you, I talked last week with the commander of the Corps in Omaha and shared my concerns about the lack of communication and coordination with local communities. Perhaps a good scrubbing of the Master Manual of the Corps of Engineers for the Missouri River may help to clear the wax out of bureaucratic ears that haven't gotten the message.

The No. 1 priority of the Corps should be flood control—flood control, period. I started out today by saying that I wanted to share a message from America's heartland. I close my remarks by sending a message to that American heartland.

As Iowa's senior Senator, I will stand with you every step of the way. My staff and I are working very closely with Iowa and midwestern congressional delegations, the Trump administration, and State agencies to make sure disaster relief programs are working effectively for homeowners, small businesses, farmers, and our local communities.

The best I think I can say to any Federal Agency and their employees, the Corps of Engineers, FEMA, and many others is to use a little common sense and cut out a lot of the redtape, but here is where it ends.

When the going gets tough, Iowans get tougher. So hang tough, keep fighting, and know that help is on the way.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MUELLER REPORT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as the world now knows, yesterday evening Attorney General Barr sent a letter to Congress on the investigation by the special counsel. In his letter, Attorney General Barr confirmed the intelligence community's assessment that through a coordinated disinformation campaign and hacking operations, Russia sought to interfere with the 2016 election. Any attempts by a foreign government to interfere with our Democratic processes, successful or unsuccessful, must not be taken lightly.

Though the special counsel's investigation was very targeted and specific, Members of the Senate Intelligence Committee, on which I serve, continue our work to more closely examine the matter as well as the broader threats posed by foreign interference as part of our oversight responsibilities. Although this was the major focus of the special counsel's investigation, it was not the most anticipated portion of Mr. Mueller's report.

After reviewing the special counsel's findings, the Attorney General concluded that the Trump campaign did not coordinate with the Russian Government in their efforts to influence the election. Based on their reaction since General Barr released his letter, it is clear the partisans who will never be satisfied with any results of an investigation will not be appeased by this report from the special counsel or General Barr's summary of Mr. Mueller's conclusions.

I hope our colleagues will trust the dedicated team of public servants who investigated this matter for the special counsel and now allow Congress to move on so we can deal with other challenges facing the American people. The worst thing we can do is get bogged down in a relitigation of all these issues over which we have no real authority because Congress's role is to conduct oversight for purposes of determining whether the laws have been faithfully executed or whether changes in the law need to occur. Obviously, the special counsel's role is entirely different. It is a criminal investigation

to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of a violation of a criminal law that would warrant presentation to a grand jury, charging, and then a trial. Congress's role is demonstrably and decidedly different.

I would like to thank Mr. Mueller for conducting his investigation with the utmost professionalism. For those of us who have seen him in action over many years, we expected nothing different. I would also like to thank Attorney General Barr for promptly communicating his conclusions with both Congress and the American people. Throughout Attorney General Barr's confirmation hearings, he stressed his intent to release as much information as possible, and he is now in the process of delivering on his word.

I agree with those on both sides of the aisle, as well as the President, who want the Mueller report to be released publicly. As much of the report as can be released, and consistent with existing law, should be made public so the American people can read it for themselves, but I also agree with the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator GRAHAM, that we also need to understand better how we got to this place.

We need to look at the decisions made by the leadership in the Department of Justice, the FBI, the intelligence community, and the Obama White House during the time in which this counterintelligence investigation was initiated against President Trump while he was still a candidate, and why, contrary to the practice as testified to by Attorney General Loretta Lynch, a defensive briefing was not given to the Trump campaign so they could know that the Russians were trying the doors and the windows and trying to get into the organization.

We know now, from Mr. Mueller's report, they were unsuccessful in establishing a connection and collusion, as the word has been used, but we know the investigation that initially was started, ultimately, came up empty-handed and resulted in this narrative, which prompted the appointment of a special counsel and this long investigation that Mr. Mueller has now completed. So we need to understand that better as part of our oversight responsibilities, particularly those of us, such as the Presiding Officer and I, who are on the Judiciary Committee who have explicit oversight responsibility for the Department of Justice as well as the FBI.

THE GREEN NEW DEAL

Mr. President, on another matter, we will soon have an opportunity to vote on the Green New Deal. Since this resolution was introduced last month, there has been a lot of confusion about exactly what is in it and how much it would cost. Generally, those aren't great questions to leave unanswered when you are trying to pass something in the Senate. We need more information, to be sure.

When the resolution was released, it made some lofty promises: achieving

net zero greenhouse gas emissions, renovating or replacing all buildings to achieve maximum energy efficiency, and providing higher education, healthcare, and housing for everybody. Missing, of course, were some of the details about how these goals would be either feasible or affordable: no plans on how to incentivize the research and development of new, cleaner energy technologies; no specifics on how much it would cost to retrofit every existing building in the country; no estimates about how the long list of new entitlement programs would be funded. The confusion only grew stronger when one of the authors of the resolution released a background summary that made even more promises, again, with no assurance of any plan that would actually be feasible or could be implemented. The Congresswoman from New York claimed that the Green New Deal would even include a government-subsidized life for those who are unwilling to work. She said we will build high-speed rail that will make airline travel unnecessary, which came as a surprise to our colleagues from Hawaii, and she said we will replace every internal combustion engine in every vehicle. As you might imagine, there was a long list of unanswered questions.

The one thing we know about the Green New Deal is, it would be a bad deal for Texas. Our State has always embraced an "all of the above" attitude when it comes to energy. Our people don't expect handouts, but they do expect opportunities that only come with economic and individual freedom. They don't want to be told what the government will permit them to do or force them to do, and they certainly don't want to be taxed to death to support people who aren't willing to work. We believe the government that governs least governs best in a nation of laws, especially when it comes to our economy.

Texas keeps its taxes, government spending, and regulations at a rational minimum to give people and small businesses that create jobs the freedom to dream big and let the free market provide. We know it works. Lower taxes and less burdensome regulation draw businesses to our State. We are one of the fastest growing States in the Nation because people are literally voting with their feet. It is because we have seen jobs created and opportunities for everyone willing to work.

Our unemployment rate is at or below the national average. I believe, in Midland, TX, in the Permian Basin, it is 2.1 percent. They can't find enough able-bodied people to perform the good, well-paying jobs that exist. We know we lead the Nation in exports, fueling both the State's economy as well as that for the entire country.

As I just alluded, the major part of our State's success is our thriving energy industry. Something that will not come as a surprise to most people is the fact that Texas leads the country in both oil and natural gas production,

but what may surprise you is the fact that we are the No. 1 producer of electricity from wind energy. One-fourth of all U.S. wind energy comes from Texas. There is no doubt that Texas's position as the largest energy-producing State has secured our position as an economic powerhouse, but if the authors of the Green New Deal get their way, oil, gas, and all hydrocarbons will all be off-limits, and the results will be disastrous without anywhere else to turn for an alternative because renewables simply aren't prepared to fill that gap. Hundreds of thousands of people will lose their jobs, exports will decline, and without a reliable alternative power source, you can expect to spend most of your day in the dark. Instead of talking about plans that would hurt my constituents in Texas and bankrupt the entire country, let's have a serious conversation about real solutions.

A few weeks ago, our friend and colleague from Maine, Senator COLLINS, joined me on a tour of the NET Power demonstration plant in La Porte, TX. NET Power has developed a first-of-its-kind system that generates affordable energy from natural gas while producing zero emissions. These innovative carbon capture technologies are what our future should look like. If American companies don't produce them first, well, we know somebody else will. So in America we need to invest in new technologies that can take our most reliable and affordable energy sources and make them cleaner.

When Senator MCCONNELL announced his intent to bring this bill to the floor, things got a little strange in the Senate. In my experience, if the majority leader says he will bring something you authored to the floor, you are thrilled—but not with the Green New Deal. The junior Senator from Massachusetts who introduced the resolution in the first place referred to this announcement as "sabotage."

Well, clearly something is wrong. I believe it is important for us to have a discussion about smart ways to reduce emissions and lessen our environmental footprint, but the way to do that is not through heavyhanded regulations or unrealistic goals to eliminate the fuel sources we need, nor is it about throwing in socialist government power grabs that only appeal to a radical wing of the other party, which is basically a distraction from the real issues we should be discussing.

The Green New Deal is bad for America, bad for Texas, and I urge my Democratic colleagues to stop this ideological race to the left and start working with us on practical solutions that actually have a chance to become law. I will vote no on the Green New Deal resolution, and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

FIX NICS ACT

Mr. President, this last Saturday marked 1 year since the Fix NICS Act was signed into law. This legislation meant a lot to me personally because it