

it would be at the expense of future generations. They knew it would cause great, irreversible harm. They did it anyway.

Here are some highlights from Exxon's false-doubt campaign.

In 1996, 14 years after the 1982 report, Exxon produced this publication: "Global warming: who's right? Facts about a debate that's turned up more questions than answers." Here, Exxon paints climate science as uncertain. It includes a statement by Exxon's then-CEO Lee Raymond that the "scientific evidence remains inconclusive as to whether human activities affect global climate." Raymond didn't mention the conclusions of the 1982 report completely exploding that statement—a report they had then sat on for 14 years. Directly contrary to Exxon's 1982 report, Raymond also warned against what he called "precipitous, poorly considered action on climate change," and he claimed that there was ample time to wait and better understand the climate system. But the 1982 Exxon report understood it quite perfectly.

Then came this 1998 Exxon publication: "Global climate change: everyone's debate." It is full of the familiar, phony climate-denial arguments. In this publication, Exxon CEO Raymond writes: "The current state of climate science is too uncertain to provide clear answers to many key questions about global climate change." Well, the 1982 report had enough answers for them to know what to do. Raymond didn't mention the 1982 report.

Nineteen ninety-eight was a year after the Kyoto Protocol. The fossil fuel industry fought to ensure that the United States would never ratify that protocol.

Exxon helped the American Petroleum Institute develop a plan they called the "Global Climate Science Communications Action Plan." The plan was to sow false doubt—doubt that the 1982 report completely blew out of the water—about climate science. The plan said: "Victory will be achieved when . . . average citizens and the media 'understand' uncertainties in climate science." It set out a national media strategy to exaggerate the uncertainties in climate science, including a plan to "identify, recruit, and train a team of five independent scientists to participate in media outreach." Train a team. It planned to distribute a "steady stream of climate science information"—for that, read "misinformation"—to science writers, newspapers, and TV journalists around the country.

If you think Exxon's false-doubt campaign is a thing of the distant past, think again. At Exxon Mobil's 2015—this decade—shareholder meeting, Exxon CEO Rex Tillerson was still alleging uncertainty, saying that we "don't really know what the climate effects of 600 parts per million versus 450 parts per million will be, because the models simply are not that good." Tillerson, like Raymond, didn't men-

tion the 1982 report, which modeled very well the climate effects. Exxon by then had sat on the 1982 report for 33 years.

If this all seems somehow familiar to you, it ought to be because Exxon stole its false-doubt strategy directly from the tobacco industry's science-denial playbook.

In 1999, the Department of Justice filed a civil lawsuit against the major tobacco companies and their associated industry groups, alleging that the tobacco companies had "engaged in and executed—and continued to engage in and execute—a massive 50-year scheme to defraud the public."

In 2006, U.S. district court judge Gladys Kessler, in a lengthy and authoritative opinion that was upheld on appeal by the U.S. court of appeals, found the tobacco companies' fraudulent campaign to have amounted to racketeering. In her ruling, she found that the tobacco industry "coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of a shared objective—to . . . maximize industry profits by preserving and expanding the market for cigarettes through a scheme to deceive the public."

Take that sentence and replace the word "cigarettes" with "fossil fuel," and Judge Kessler's finding describes exactly what Exxon and other companies did: coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of a shared objective—to maximize industry profits by preserving and expanding the market for fossil fuel through a scheme to deceive the public.

In the face of increasingly obvious and overwhelming evidence, Exxon and the fossil fuel industry have recently backed away a little bit from their false-doubt efforts on climate science, but have they really changed their stripes, or have they, in their long battle to prevent meaningful climate action, just fallen back to new battlements?

Take carbon pricing. Economists from across the ideological spectrum say carbon pricing is the most efficient and the most effective way to reduce carbon emissions. In the past year, Exxon and BP each announced that they supported carbon pricing and would give \$1 million to Americans for Carbon Dividends, a group advocating for carbon pricing. But these donations are a drop in the bucket compared to the tens of millions Exxon has given to political machinery peddling climate denial and opposing carbon pricing or compared to the \$13 million BP just spent to defeat Washington State's carbon pricing initiative.

Senator SCHATZ and I have some firsthand experience because we have introduced a revenue-neutral carbon fee bill in the last three Congresses. I can assure you, Exxon has made no effort to support it.

Industry support for carbon pricing seems to mysteriously evaporate in

proximity to an actual carbon pricing bill.

Science writer and environmentalist Bill McKibben sums up Exxon's climate strategy well. I quote him here:

[T]he world's largest and most powerful oil company knew everything there was to know about climate change by the mid-1980s, and then spent the next few decades systematically funding climate denial and lying about the state of the science.

That is its record. It is responsible for where we are in Congress. After the Citizens United decision, it paid to slaughter bipartisanship in Congress on climate change with its new Citizens United political weaponry. It paid a whole armada of front groups to lie about climate change, and those front groups are still out there and are still lying. The industry is behind the relentless climate antagonism we have seen from business groups, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, as if clean and renewable energy doesn't involve commerce and manufacturing. It created and funded a vast apparatus of denial and obstruction, and it has lied and lied and lied.

There is every reason to believe that the oil industry, with Exxon at the lead, remains just as opposed to meaningful climate action today as it has been for three decades. With its long history of lying, it is easy to believe that whatever corporate sinews might bind Exxon to the truth are long atrophied and degraded and that this is just another chapter in the industry's great climate scam—that this is the "pretend to support a carbon price" chapter of the scam.

Even if somewhere in Exxon's corporate bowels there were some flicker of sincerity, it would not be enough for Exxon to just stop the scam. After all of the evil Exxon has done, it needs to undo its evil, not just stop doing evil.

It is not enough to stand next to the burning house you have lit on fire and pledge no further arson. Even if you are sincere about no further arson, it is still not enough. You need to help step in and put the fire out. You need to put your heart and your back into putting out the fire that you lit.

When you are sincere, Exxon, I will be in. Let's solve this. Yet you have a long record and much to atone for. Meanwhile, our planet remains on course for the great, irreversible harm your own scientists predicted nearly four decades ago.

It is due to Exxon's political mischief that we have yet to wake up in Congress to what Exxon itself predicted 37 years ago.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

SOCIALISM

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I confess that my fascination—or maybe "obsession"—is another word to describe it—with what some people proclaim to be their newfound belief in socialism is really a mystery to me. It is something

I have thought and read quite a bit about just so I could try to understand what they could possibly be thinking.

A recent poll found that 4 in 10 Americans say they prefer living in a socialist country to a capitalist country—40 percent. For those of us who have witnessed the rise and fall of socialism over the course of our lives or who have even read about it in the history books, that is a major cause for concern. Yet today's socialists try to distinguish themselves from those countries that have actually implemented socialism—Venezuela, the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and other failed socialist nations. They are saying that they are democratic socialists.

As a matter of fact, one of our Senate colleagues who is running for President—the junior Senator from Vermont, not the distinguished Senator on the floor—is speaking today at an event in defense of democratic socialism. I have to say, if you ask me, that is an oxymoron. You can't support democracy and socialism at the same time. Those two ideals are completely at odds with one another. Yet what we see happening is people who use labels to confuse the American people and who claim to be what they are not—literally being Trojan horses for ideas that have been demonstrated to have failed throughout the world's history.

Many of these so-called democratic socialists have gotten into the habit of suggesting that Scandinavian countries are successful models for their ideology. They will point to the economic successes of these countries, combined with their expansive government-run programs—free higher education, universal healthcare, subsidized childcare. They will say: "Look, it works." Robust welfare programs are not the cornerstones of socialism, although many seem to think that this is the case.

The poll I mentioned earlier found that there is a broad disagreement about what exactly constitutes socialism. To me, one of the most interesting findings of some of the polling is when you ask some people what "socialism" is, they say, "Well, that is being social." They also say, "Well, it is universal healthcare, tuition-free education, and a living wage." Only two-thirds of the people say it involves a state-controlled economy, and fewer still believe socialism involves the state control and the regulation of private property, the media, and communications.

Let me be clear. The most fundamental aspect of socialism isn't the social benefits it provides; it is having the government in control. It is the surrendering of your individual freedom and choices to government coercion and brute force. That is the only way people can be forced into limiting their freedom, their activity, and their incomes is by brute government force. That is the single most important, distinguishing feature of socialism.

So those who claim that these Scandinavian countries with social security programs are shining examples of socialism could not be more wrong. These countries largely operate free markets, and they are the first to correct us and say they are not socialists. Nevertheless, so-called democratic socialists continue to name these countries as successful examples because the only true examples of socialism don't poll quite nearly as high. The prime example is Venezuela.

Venezuela's troubled story began in the late nineties when then-Presidential candidate Hugo Chavez delivered an impassioned speech that promised to lead Venezuela into a socialist paradise. He talked about the country's wealth being stolen by evil capitalists and greedy corporations, and he promised hope and change if he were elected. That sounds pretty similar to what we hear from the so-called democratic socialists today.

For any Americans who wonder if that hope and change being promised by these candidates might actually work, let me reassure you that there would be a lot of change but that it would not be the type of change you would want. Again, look at Venezuela. The government took over businesses, shut down free markets, and suppressed free speech. As a result, one of the richest countries in the world is now among the poorest. Basic commodities like food, medicine, and water are in short supply. About 6 months ago, I myself was at the border between Colombia and Venezuela, and I witnessed Venezuelans going across the border into Colombia in order to pick up some of the basics of life—medicine, food, and the like.

Of course, with regard to freedom of the press, well, you can throw that out the window in Venezuela, and, of course, crime rates have skyrocketed. That is why you don't see caravans of people attempting to immigrate to countries like Venezuela—it is just the opposite. The United Nations announced last week that more than 4 million people have escaped Venezuela—4 million refugees from Venezuela—and that a quarter of those have left in the last 7 months. The UN Refugee Agency referred to this mass exodus as the "largest in the recent history of Latin America and the Caribbean."

That is what happens under socialism. Citizens flee poverty, government control, and corruption in search of opportunities to build better lives for themselves. The trouble is, no matter what word you put in front of the word "socialism," it doesn't really matter because it is still socialism.

I think Winston Churchill summed it up best, as he frequently did, when he said:

The inherent vice of capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings. The inherent virtue of Socialism is the equal sharing of miseries.

I can assure you that if these democratic socialists get their way, there

will be no shortage of miseries to share.

I urge all of our colleagues and all Americans to learn, to share the lessons of history, and to remind our fellow citizens that so-called democratic socialism is nothing more than a Trojan horse that would destroy our country and destroy our way of life. Most fundamentally of all, it would destroy the American dream.

We can look around America and find good examples, but, of course, I am partial to the example of the State of Texas as to how free market ideals and less government can produce more prosperity, more freedom, and a better quality of life. Yet, if our Democratic friends—particularly those who are running for President—get their way with Medicare for All, the Green New Deal, and a host of other disastrous policies, the sort of prosperity and opportunity and freedom of choice that you see now in places like Texas will be out the window.

When our friend the minority leader, the Senator from New York, calls the Senate a legislative graveyard, in one respect, he is entirely right, because we are going to do everything we can to make sure the U.S. Senate is a firewall against these disastrous socialist policies.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. President, on another matter, there has been a lot of discussion since the election of 2016 about election security, and correctly so. With the first primary of the 2020 election being only 8 months away, there could not be a more critical time to discuss the work that has been done since 2016 to secure our Nation's election infrastructure.

There has been a lot of focus over the last 2½ years on what exactly did and did not happen in 2016. We know there was a lot of meddling by Russian state actors who tried to sow discord and confusion and pit American against American through the use of social media and propaganda. There is one piece of information that has remained perfectly clear—and it is of some comfort to me—which is that no votes were actually changed or altered, but we can't assume this will be the case in the future. What we did see was a concerted effort by the Russian Government to infiltrate our systems and sow division and discord among Americans, as the Presiding Officer knows, which was the conclusion reached by the intelligence community assessment in January of 2017, which was supported by the Senate Intelligence Committee's unclassified summary of that assessment last summer, and which was again reiterated in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's recent report.

I don't want to mince words on this point. Any attempt, successful or unsuccessful, to interfere with our elections is unacceptable and would severely undermine our self-government and our Democratic values.