

Alana, you are indeed one of those elite few. Thank you for your service to Minnesota, and thank you for what you will continue to do for many years ahead to move forward the hard but precious work of improving people's lives.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I speak in leader time.

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

TROOP DEPLOYMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, the Defense Department announced that 1,000 additional troops would be deployed to the Middle East. This is the second deployment of 1,000 or more troops in the past 30 days, ostensibly to deal with Iran's increased activity in the region.

Despite these two announcements, the President has yet to address the Nation about these developments. The President has yet to articulate a strategy about American involvement in the region. He has yet to send a single military commander to testify before the Armed Services Committee. And he has yet to explain what his policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran is supposed to achieve. All we have heard is the Secretary of State, our chief diplomat, rattling the sabers of war.

As U.S. troops again prepare to deploy to the Middle East, this administration has an obligation to explain to the American people exactly what is happening and why. If they have a case, they must make it public. Americans are rightly skeptical and tired of endless wars in the Middle East—a reticence that many on the Republican side don't seem to share. Americans know that smaller actions have a tendency to escalate into larger actions even when there is no congressional authority and no check.

The administration has offered to send various officials to give classified briefings, but, frankly, that is not nearly good enough. We have learned a hard truth from our experience in Iraq—that the drums of war start beating behind closed doors. The President must make his pitch to the Nation instead of another closed-door meeting with Senators. As the Commander in Chief, he owes that to every American but especially to the American service-members, and their families, whom he is sending into the Middle East.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, Leader McCONNELL has indicated he plans to have the Senate consider legislation next week on the administration's request for supplemental appropriations to handle migration at our southern border. As I have said many times, Democrats want to provide the necessary resources to secure our borders and ensure that everyone who arrives there is treated hu-

manely; however, the sheer chaos of this administration's policy, the sheer mismanagement, the erratic nature when the President says one thing one day and another the next, mean that we must be precise and careful about how we do it.

The fact is very simple: President Trump's immigration policies are inhumane, erratic, fleeting, and impossible to carry out at the same time.

Right now, on the Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, the Trump administration has authorized a for-profit company to build a temporary shelter for migrants that is little better than an internment camp. We have heard routinely about the separation of children from parents, about the horrible conditions at the DHS facilities, about children—children—in cages. That is as un-American as anything.

This past week, I read in the New York Times the story of a 4-month-old boy. It wrenches my heart. He was separated from his parents—a cleavage so severe at an age so young that the boy has suffered a great trauma. He is now more than a year and a half old. He is back in his home country of Romania with his parents. He still can't walk on his own. He still hasn't spoken.

What are we doing to these innocent children? What are we doing? Stories like these are heart-wrenching; the policies that create them, unconscionable; and so often, the policies are announced according to the President's whim. Every day, the President seems to have a different crazy idea, often contradicting his previous thought—a national emergency declaration to build a wall, tariffs for Mexico, shutting down the border entirely.

Last night, the President tweeted that ICE was planning mass immigration arrests and removal. The President seems to just invent a new policy in the morning by tweet with the sole purpose of rallying his base.

Ideas like deporting millions of immigrants inside our border have been dismissed by government officials in charge of immigration as unrealistic. The very people the President puts in charge say this policy can't happen. It doesn't bother him. Maybe he was doing this to talk about it at his rally tonight, his election rally in Florida. But I will tell you something. He tried this before the 2018 election—big crisis at the border. It didn't seem to work. What appeals to a base—a rather narrow base of the President's supporters does not appeal to the American people when it comes to being erratic, inhumane, harsh, and ineffective on immigration.

Members of both parties should be weary—weary—about giving the administration additional funding if it is not going to be used to secure our border or provide better conditions for migrants and asylum seekers, especially children.

Again, just remember what the President has called for in the last few months, none of which have happened

and none of which have curbed the flow at the border—so many different things, none of which make sense. Remember the national emergency declaration to build a wall. Remember the tariffs with Mexico. Remember the shutting down of the border entirely. And now mass immigration arrests and removal. It is a policy that is erratic, unsuccessful, ineffective, and maybe worst of all, inhumane—even taking a 4-month-old from his parents and leaving that child with a trauma probably for the rest of his life.

We Democrats have a proposal that is common sense, that would actually do things. At one point, the President seemed to support it, but that was fleeting like every one of his other proposals on immigration. Here is what we propose. I hope the President is listening, and I hope, at least, our Republican colleagues are listening, because we can actually get something done.

We propose to provide more immigration judges at the border to reduce the backlog in cases.

We provide for the allowance of asylum seekers to apply for asylum within their home countries. Why are these people fleeing? The President would have Americans believe they are all drug dealers and MS-13 members. There are a few of those, and they shouldn't be let in, and they shouldn't be given any mercy. Yet the vast majority of these people—you have seen the pictures—is made up of parents and children. Sometimes their daughters have been threatened with rape by gangs or their sons have been murdered or they are going to burn down their houses or burn down their businesses if they don't go along with the gangs. Who wouldn't flee? Who wouldn't? So let them apply for asylum and not have to pay the coyotes and not have them make this dangerous trek of 1,000 miles from their own countries. It is a good proposal. At one point, the President entertained it. Let's do it.

Finally, we provide security assistance to Central American countries in order to crack down on the drug cartels, the violent gangs, the corruption, and the lawlessness.

These are the things we should be doing—having more immigration judges to reduce the backlog; allowing for asylum seekers to apply for asylum in their home countries; and providing security assistance to crack down on the drug cartels, violent gangs, and the coyotes.

Yesterday, unfortunately, the State Department did the opposite. It announced it would cut off all further security assistance, including over \$400 million of already obligated assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, until the countries reduce the number of migrants coming to the United States. Talk about cutting off your nose to spite your face.

What an insane, insane new policy idea from the President—even crazier than some of the others. The Trump administration is actually doing the

one thing that will make the migration problem drastically worse. He will then blame somebody else, but everyone can see what is going on. It is almost as if the administration wants the problems at our borders to continue so the President can demagogue the issue for political purposes. This policy is complete nonsense.

So, as Leader McCONNELL moves to the administration's supplemental border requests in the near future, I urge my Republican colleagues to study our legislation. Unlike what the administration is doing and proposing, our policies are reasonable, measured, and actually suited to the problem at hand.

THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT  
AND ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. President, I have been talking a lot to this day on election security, and I will just make a final pitch.

We hope that Leader McCONNELL will stop stonewalling the need to improve the security of our elections and prevent Russian or Chinese or Iranian or North Korean interference in 2020, which would gnaw at the roots of our democracy. There are lots of ways we can do it. We have UC statements on the floor and legislation we could bring to the floor that is bipartisan. We have an NDAA bill within which we will request some election security measures, and we have the appropriations process by which we can give money that is badly needed to the States.

We hope our Republican colleagues will join us in this. Preventing foreign countries from interfering in our elections is not a Democratic or a Republican issue; it is an American issue. It is the very thing George Washington and so many of the other Founding Fathers warned us against over 200 years ago. There is no need for this to be partisan. We hope we can come together on the issue.

I yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRUZ). Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Sean Cairncross, of Minnesota, to be Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation.

Mitch McConnell, Roy Blunt, John Barra, Pat Roberts, Mike Crapo, John Cornyn, John Thune, Kevin Cramer, Roger F. Wicker, John Boozman, John Hoeven, Thom Tillis, Johnny Isakson, Tim Scott, Mike Braun, Richard Burr, Lindsey Graham.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Sean Cairncross, of Minnesota, to be Chief Executive Officer, Millennium Challenge Corporation, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 59, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 166 Ex.]

YEAS—59

Alexander	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blackburn	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hawley	Roberts
Braun	Hoover	Romney
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Capito	Inhofe	Rubio
Carper	Isakson	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Collins	Jones	Scott (SC)
Coons	Kennedy	Shelby
Cornyn	King	Sinema
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	McSally	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young
Ernst	Murkowski	

NAYS—37

Baldwin	Heinrich	Schatz
Bennet	Kaine	Schumer
Blumenthal	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Booker	Leahy	Smith
Brown	Markey	Stabenow
Cantwell	Menendez	Tester
Cardin	Merkley	Van Hollen
Casey	Murphy	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warren
Duckworth	Peters	Whitehouse
Durbin	Reed	Wyden
Feinstein	Rosen	
Hassan	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—4

Gillibrand	Hirono
Harris	Udall

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 59, the nays are 37.

The motion is agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent the Senate stand in recess following the remarks of myself, Senator COLLINS, and Senator KING.

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

SENATOR COLLINS' 7,000TH VOTE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I want to take a moment to recognize a remarkable event that this institution was fortunate enough to witness just a few minutes ago. During the vote we just concluded, our distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Maine, cast her 7,000th rollcall vote. It is a great milestone for Senator COLLINS which bears witness to her dedication to this work and most especially to the people of Maine. It is actually even more impressive than that. This wasn't just Senator COLLINS' 7,000th vote; it was her 7,000th consecutive vote. From the moment she was sworn in, she has

not missed a single vote. Difficulties with travel or bad weather? She plans around them. Personal challenges? She adapts and overcomes. Other priorities, like political events or speaking engagements? All that takes a back seat to her day job. No sick days. No getting caught in meetings. No losing track of time in committee. No excuses. Just days and months and years of peerless preparation and remarkable dedication to her Senate duties and to the Members she is so proud to represent. Senator COLLINS learned from her parents, Donald and Patricia, who each had a turn as mayor of Caribou, ME, among other achievements.

We know our friend Senator COLLINS deeply admires her predecessor, Senator Margaret Chase Smith—another legendary Maine Republican. Among her achievements, she stood boldly against McCarthyism and insisted on independent thought and fair treatment. But as remarkable as Senator Margaret Chase Smith was, Senator COLLINS has surpassed her distinguished predecessor in at least one way: Senator SMITH's own impressive string of consecutive votes ended just shy of 3,000; Senator COLLINS has 7,000 and counting.

She is always prepared, always thoroughly well informed, and always present. That is what today's milestone tells us, and that is exactly who Senator COLLINS is every single day. She is a valued colleague. She is a friend. And frankly, she is an inspiration. Thank goodness she isn't stopping any time soon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. I just wanted to thank the majority leader for his very generous comments, as well as acknowledge the good wishes and congratulations from so many of my colleagues, including my colleague from Maine, Senator KING.

This is a momentous occasion for me, a real milestone. I am proud of the fact that I have never missed a rollcall vote during the time I have been privileged to represent the great State of Maine in the Senate. There have been some close calls over the years, but fortunately I have been able to be present for each one. I realize that I have been blessed with good health and that when I had broken ankles, including one that required surgery, it fortunately happened over the Christmas break, so once again I was able to come back and not miss a vote.

But it is the embodiment of how seriously I take the responsibilities with which I have been entrusted by the people of Maine. Voting is a Senator's most solemn responsibility, and I feel strongly about making sure that my State is represented on each and every rollcall vote we take in this Chamber. It hasn't always been easy, but it is such a privilege and honor to represent the people of the great State of Maine.

I thank the majority leader, Senator McCONNELL, for acknowledging this