

bring down the high cost of prescription drugs. Instead, it is silent, and the best we can do is to get a speech from a Senator from Illinois.

So I hope someone is listening, and I certainly hope Senator MCCONNELL's office is listening.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Madam President, thank you to Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED and their staff for their work to produce the Fiscal Year 2020 defense authorization bill. The Senate has spent very little time actually working on legislation this Congress so I look forward to considering this bipartisan bill and debating amendments.

This bill that the Senate is expected to consider soon authorizes \$750 billion for defense—far higher than last year's amount of \$716 billion, and far higher than the House version of \$733 billion. This is because we are all committed to a strong national defense and for the protection of our men and women in uniform. But we also must make critical investments in other parts of the federal government that also contribute to a strong national defense.

Before becoming Secretary of Defense, then-General Mattis was fond of noting that if Congress doesn't fund the State Department then he'd need to buy more bullets.

We cannot hope to compete against China and Russia if we are not making critical federal investments here at home in everything from medical and science research to affordable, quality education.

So while this defense authorization bill is an important step, we must reach an agreement on budget negotiations so that we can begin working on appropriations bills as soon as possible.

Now let me mention a few key issues in this bill.

There is widespread agreement about the importance of space and the seriousness of the threats posed to our assets in space. We also all agree that the Defense Department needs to ensure that it prioritizes space personnel and equipment so that the issue doesn't get lost among many important defense concerns. But many of us were openly skeptical about the Department's proposal for a significant \$2 billion "Space Force" bureaucracy.

Should we spend \$2 billion on bureaucracy, or should we invest it in new, real space capabilities? The NDAA reaches a reasonable compromise on this subject. It elevates U.S. Space Command as a co-equal combatant command. It places more focus on space at the Secretary of Defense level, and it does not impose a large bureaucracy on the Air Force.

I appreciate this compromise, and I look forward to continuing to work with the chairman and ranking member to ensure that we are focused on providing clear organization and emphasizing real capabilities over more bureaucracy.

Another area we need to focus on is the process—the painfully long proc-

ess—that the Department of Defense has for developing and fielding new weapons systems.

One of the most illuminating—and frustrating—hearings this year in the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee was with DOD's head of research, Dr. Griffin.

It is clear from our conversation that the Pentagon is not moving at the speed of relevance in terms of deciding on new weapons systems and delivering them in reasonable timeframes. Dr. Griffin noted that the most advanced aircraft ever built—the SR-71 Blackbird—was designed, built, and flown in less time than it takes some parts of the bureaucracy these days to decide what to do next.

This has to improve. So I thank the chairman and ranking member for incorporating a reform I have proposed to speed up the process that the Pentagon goes through to conduct its initial analysis of alternatives. We know that this analysis of alternatives has dragged on for 18 months . . . 24 months . . . 27 months, in some cases. It is unconscionable. I hope this amendment can limit this nonsense and get the Department moving again.

I also appreciate the chairman and ranking member working with me to extend lease authorities for depots and arsenals such as Rock Island Arsenal in Illinois and on the honorary promotion of Tuskegee Airman Colonel Charles McGee, a true American hero.

I also hope that we can debate two other amendments I have introduced, which go to the heart of Congress's constitutional duties.

The first is the need for Congress to stop abdicating its responsibility on matters of war and peace. Article I of the Constitution gives Congress the sole authority to declare war. I voted for the war in Afghanistan, but I never imagined that we would still be there 18 years later, or that the bill I voted for back in 2001 would still be on the books, unchanged.

My amendment would sunset all authorizations for the use of force after 10 years so that Congress can take up the issue and engage in its constitutional duties.

I have also cosponsored an amendment led by Senator UDALL making clear that Congress has not given the executive branch any authority whatsoever to go to war against Iran.

These are matters of war and peace which demand this Chamber's attention. Think of the places around the globe currently justified under the 2001 AUMF voted on 18 years ago. Think of how dangerous and destabilizing a third war in the Middle East would be. I fear that we are drifting in that direction. Congress must step in.

My other amendment deals with this President's unbelievable decision to take money from our military so that our servicemembers could pay for his medieval wall on the southwest border.

It used to be that Mexico was going to pay for the wall. Remember that?

The President boasted about that more than 200 times on the campaign trail and in the Oval Office. But in February, he announced instead that he would take \$6.1 billion from the troops and put it toward building a wall.

We need a robust debate on the proper, effective way to respond to the humanitarian crisis at our border. But taking money from our men and women in uniform is not the way to do it. I hope we can debate this more.

Madam President, I hope that we may be able to debate these issues during floor consideration of this authorization bill. In the meantime, I reiterate my thanks to Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED for their work on this bill.

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

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

MR. THUNE. Mr. President, this week we will begin consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act, the annual legislation to authorize funding for our military and national defense. This year's legislation builds on last year's bill, with its emphasis on restoring military readiness and ensuring that we are prepared to meet threats from major powers like China and Russia.

Some may take it for granted that we have the strongest military in the world, but our military strength, built on the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform, requires sustained investment. In recent years, budgetary impasses paired with increased operational demands have left our Armed Forces with manpower deficits and under-equipped for confronting the threats of the 21st century. Given the multitude of threats around the world, we cannot afford to become complacent or ease our preparedness. The truth is, the last time our military underwent a comprehensive modernization, Ronald Reagan was President.

In November 2018, the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission released a report warning that our readiness had eroded to the point where we might struggle to win a war against a major power like Russia or China. The Commission noted that we would be especially vulnerable if we were ever called on to fight a war on two fronts. Repairing this readiness deficit has to be one of Congress's most important priorities.

Last year's National Defense Authorization Act took major steps forward on modernization, making significant and targeted investments in the research, manpower, and materiel needed to equip our military to face 21st-century threats. We have made real

progress, but there is a lot more work to be done.

This year's National Defense Authorization Act focuses on building on the progress we have made. It invests in the planes, combat vehicles, and ships of the future, including the Joint Strike Fighter and the future B-21 bomber, which will be based at Ellsworth Air Force Base in my home State of South Dakota. It authorizes funding for research and development and advanced technology. It authorizes funds to modernize our nuclear arsenal to maximize our deterrence capabilities. It also focuses on ensuring that we are equipped to meet threats on new fronts, including in the space and cyber domains.

It is important that we invest in these new areas of the battlefield to ensure we are prepared to meet and defeat threats. We are once again in an era of great power competition, where states like China and Russia harbor imperial ambitions. The National Defense Authorization Act will help ensure that we have a credible deterrence and are equipped to meet threats from great powers as well as rogue states and terrorist organizations. This legislation will also invest in our relationships with key allies and security partners to help counter shared threats.

Importantly, this NDAA will help our military bases rebound from recent natural disasters.

Finally, of course, this legislation will invest in our most important resource—our troops and in their families.

This year's National Defense Authorization Act authorizes a 3.1-percent pay increase for our troops, the largest increase in a decade. They more than deserve it, and an increase is important for recruitment and retention in our All-Volunteer Force when the economy is as strong as it is.

The bill also focuses on addressing the recent significant health and safety issues faced by many families with private on-base housing, and it contains measures to support military spouses seeking employment and increased access to childcare on military installations.

It also allows parental leave to be taken in multiple increments, better adapting to the lives of our warfighters.

In his first annual address to Congress, George Washington noted: "To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace."

There is no better way to preserve peace and protect our Nation than to ensure that the U.S. military is the best equipped, most capable fighting force in the world.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the National Defense Authorization Act and to give our military men and women the tools they need to defend the country.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ADMINISTRATION POLICIES

Mr. SCHUMER. Now, if there is one word to describe the State of the Trump administration, it is "chaos." The administration's policy at the border is in chaos; the administration's foreign policy is in chaos; and the Trump administration itself is in chaos: the vacancies in so many agencies, people within the administration fighting with each other, and the President tweeting away, even if it is unconnected to the people who actually administer the policies.

So even though this has been a constant theme in the Trump Presidency—the chaos within—it is getting worse and more alarming.

On the border, the President announces a new cockamamie policy almost every day: a national emergency to build a wall, tariffs with Mexico, shutting down the border entirely, mass arrests and deportations inside in our borders. Many of these "policies" were announced by tweet with little or no thought or force of action behind them. Not one of them has been implemented, even though the President could implement many on his own. Most were tossed aside as casually as they were announced, and it is easy to see why. The policies he has announced at the border are cruel, inhumane, ineffective, and most are impossible to carry out.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is cutting off security assistance to Central American countries—the one thing his administration was doing to stem migration and address the root causes in the first place. Even on the issue the President talks about most, the chaos of his administration is making the problem exponentially worse, not better.

It doesn't get any better when it comes to the administration's foreign policy. In response to increased activity from Iran, the President has now announced two deployments of 1,000 troops or more without even explaining to the American people what is happening and why. As Commander in Chief, he owes it to the American people, and especially our troops, to clarify what he hopes to achieve in the Middle East. What is the strategy? What is the goal? What is the limit of what we will do, and what are the things we will do? Any foreign policy expert will tell you outlining these things helps the strategy and helps build support for it. Does the President have clear goals? Does he have a strategy or, once again, when he wakes up in the morning and thinks—one day, he tweets about it, and the next day he

thinks something else and tweets something different or even contradictory.

We have no earthly clue to the President's strategy or goals because, like everything else in his administration, his foreign policy is wracked by chaos.

The Trump administration, in terms of its personnel and leadership, is in chaos as well. Yesterday the President's choice for Secretary of Defense withdrew. Where was the vetting? Why wasn't this known by the White House long before he got to this level? So now the most powerful military in the world has been without a Senate-confirmed Secretary since Secretary Mattis resigned in December of last year—6 months without a confirmed head of the DOD. How can we conduct a foreign policy, a military policy with no head of DOD?

The administration is escalating tensions in Iran and sending troops overseas without a permanent Defense Secretary, someone who is really in charge and thoroughly vetted at the helm. It is not just the Defense Department where chaos reigns. The positions of Homeland Security Secretary, OMB Secretary, SBA Administrator, Ambassador to the U.N., and even the Chief of Staff in the White House are all in the acting capacity.

It is a revolving door. People want to leave. Most people of substance can't stand the chaos and misdirection from the President, and we have had less focused attention to issue after issue from this President than any in a very long time because of chaos. The institutions of our government under Donald Trump lack steady and experienced leadership. It is a crisis of competence. The President is making decisions without proper counsel, preparation, or even communications between the relevant agencies. It is policy by whim. The withdrawal of his Secretary of Defense nomination is only the latest example of an administration in chaos.

I raise these points not to disparage the President but because the swirling chaos in his administration hurts the American people. It has frustrated our ability to find real solutions at the border and stunted progress on issues Americans care about, like infrastructure and healthcare. Above all, I fear the chaos in the White House could lead our country closer to a conflict with Iran that most Americans want to avoid.

In short, the amateur hour must end. The U.S. Government is not an episode of "The Apprentice." It is real life with real consequences. It is deadly serious business. For the sake of the country, the Trump administration needs to get its act together.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, now on climate, when I come to the floor to speak on matters of legislation, it is almost always about legislation here in Congress. But in our Federal system of government, the States, too, have enormous power to shape the current events in our country.