We have watched its Communist leadership nearly double military spending in the last decade and push the boundaries in everything from offshore territorial claims to 5G technology.

America's edge is in jeopardy. Our allies in the Pacific are uneasy. The administration's budget agreement with the Speaker will allow America to ensure that our own foot stays on the gas pedal as well.

Meanwhile, in the Middle East, we are confronted daily with escalating threats to our allies and interests. State-sponsored terror and proxy actions are becoming bolder. Gray zone activity in places like the Straits of Hormuz is raising the economic and geopolitical stakes of Iran's meddling.

From Syria to Crimea, Russia continues to stretch its legs. Not since the height of the Soviet Union have we seen Moscow this focused on extending influence beyond its borders. All over the world, historic alliances and partnerships like NATO need to be strengthened and renewed for this new landscape.

Fortunately, in the coming days, we will have the opportunity to address all these areas—Europe, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, and beyond. That opportunity is this bipartisan spending agreement. So I am grateful to the administration for ensuring that such robust funding for our national security is included in this package. It will make us safer worldwide and make needed investments in our own facilities right here at home, like Fort Knox, Fort Campbell, and the Blue Grass Army Depo, which Kentucky is proud to host.

What is more, I commend the President's team for firmly holding the line on the laundry list of leftwing policy riders that some House Democrats had sought to push throughout their partisan appropriations process over there on the other side.

We are talking about far-left wish list items, things like reversing the Trump administration's decision and getting title X taxpayer dollars flowing back into the pocket of Planned Parenthood, weakening the conscience rights of healthcare professionals, removing protections for the Second Amendment, and efforts that would have weakened ICE and defunded the President's efforts to secure our border.

These are just some of the policy riders the far left had hoped to smuggle into the appropriations process—perhaps using the full faith and credit of the United States as leverage, but the administration froze all of them out. They are not in this deal. They shepherded an agreement that delivers on our most basic responsibility to the American people. They set the stage to provide for the common defense. Today it is the House's turn to follow through, and then, in the near future, it will be ours.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2258

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the title of the bill for a second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2258) to provide anti-retaliation protections for antitrust whistleblowers.

Mr. MCCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, we all know that yesterday former Special Counsel Mueller testified before two House committees. I believe it was crucial for the American people to hear straight from Robert Mueller's mouth that the President was not—underline ''not''—exonerated by his report, despite what the President claims. It is utterly amazing. Mueller says something, and the President says the exact opposite to the media. We have never had a President who has lied so often. He knows what Mueller said, but he thinks he can dupe people when he says it, and I hope it is not true.

It is important for the American people to hear straight from Robert Mueller's mouth that the President is not telling the truth when he claims that Mueller found no obstruction. Mueller did not. Anyone who watched the hearing saw it. It was as plain as could be, but that is not the subject of my remarks today.

My remarks are about election security. Above all, it was important for all of us to hear straight from Robert Mueller's mouth that the threat from Russia and other foreign adversaries seeking to meddle in our elections was very real and still very much ongoing.

When asked about Russian interference in our democracy, Mr. Mueller responded:

It wasn't a single attempt. They're doing it as we sit here. And they expect to do it during the next campaign.

Leader MCCONNELL, let me read you those sentences, if you care about America. Mueller said about Russian interference:

It wasn't a single attempt. They're doing it as we sit here. And they expect to do it during the next campaign.

He went on to say that many more countries were developing capabilities similar to what Russia has. He reminded members of the House Intelligence Committee that Russian fake images reached nearly 126 million people on Facebook alone.

As if it even needed to be spelled out, Mr. Mueller added: ''Much more needs to be done in order to protect against these intrusions, not just by the Russians but by others as well.''

Mueller's testimony was a clarion call for election security. Mueller's testimony should be a wake-up call to every American—Democrat, Republican, liberal, and conservative—that the integrity of our elections is at stake and to be manipulated by a foreign power.

This is all about the future of this country. If we lose faith in our electoral process, democracy begins to walk away from us, and we will be a different country than the glorious country we have been since 1789. Yet our Republican colleagues put their heads in the sand.

Donald Trump, as usual, with his enormous self-ego, doesn't want to admit the Russians interfered—even though he encouraged it publicly—because he feels it will cast some illegitimacy on his election. The election is over. He is President. I wish he weren't. But that is not the issue here.

The issue is the future of our democracy. And our Republican colleagues, who, once again, either are afraid of President Trump or, even worse, seeking advantage from Russian interference, are keeping their heads in the sand.

We have tried. We have worked with our Republican colleagues to craft several bipartisan bills—Democrats and Republicans alike—to safeguard our election infrastructure and deter any foreign adversary from targeting our democracy in 2020. We have asked the Republican majority on the Appropriations Committee to devote more resources to harden their election systems but to no avail.

Leader MCCONNELL has refused to bring these bills to the floor. Republicans have rebuffed our request for additional appropriations this year. Election security goes into MCCONNELL's legislative graveyard, even though it should be the most nonpartisan of issues.

He has refused—refused—to let us consider anything, using his power as majority leader. And he is backed up by every single Republican who is complicit in not stopping the Russians, as Putin seeks to stretch his long arm and delve into the sacred process of how we elect our officials.

What could possibly be the downside of ensuring our elections are fair and

free from foreign interference? Why would Leader MCCONNELL and every one of our Republican colleagues, who now have failed to step up to the plate even though some of them work with our colleagues on bills, ignore the admonitions of the Founding Fathers, who said that foreign interference is a grave danger to democracy? What could be the downside of ensuring our elections are fair and free? I ask that question of Leader MCCONNELL.

The only excuse I have heard is he says that additional action isn't necessary. Well, Mr. Mueller, who has done far more investigative work on this than just about anybody else, cleared up all of that yesterday. He didn't say we have done enough already. He didn't say we are on top of it. He said that much more needs to be done.

Leader MCCONNELL, do you disagree? Is Mueller wrong? Are all the experts wrong—the FBI, appointed by President Trump; the NSA, appointed by President Trump; and all those leaders who say we need to do more? We have heard them.

We are going to continue our fight for election security. We are not going to let Leader MCCONNELL put the bills passed by the House into his legislative graveyard without a fight. You are going to hear from us on this issue over and over again.

The legislative graveyard of Leader MCCONNELL is known from one end of the country to the other. Americans know he doesn't want to help them. He doesn't want to help middle-class Americans.

The graveyard of our Republican colleagues, in obeisance to powerful and special interests, gets larger, more stunning, and more debilitating to this country every day.

Yesterday, Democratic Senators requested unanimous consent to pass some election security legislation that they have worked on, much of which was bipartisan. The Republican majority blocked them. Soon—I believe in about an hour—I will be asking unanimous consent on the House-passed election security bill. It is sitting here. It is in the leader's drawer. Is he going to let this go to the legislative graveyard? We will see in an hour. I hope at least one of my Republican colleagues will come to the floor and urge that we vote on this or at least debate it and amend it—one.

The Republican leader's intransigent resistance to this effort is inexplicable. Why he wants to put election security in his legislative graveyard is impossible to explain on a logical basis. I believe his intransigence and his resistance are untenable.

When I move in about an hour for unanimous consent to bring the House bill to the floor, maybe something will be chirping in some of the brains of some of my colleagues here and say: We can't allow the Russians to interfere, and we have to do something.

If they don't agree with what the House passed, let them propose amendments or let them propose an alternative, but let us debate. This is a national security issue of paramount importance.

I urge my friend the leader to stand down and let election security come to the floor. If he doesn't, all of America will know, when Russia interferes, why.

BUDGET AGREEMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on another matter—this is on deficits. I am not in the habit of commenting on every opinion issued by newspapers I don't typically agree with, but this week, the Wall Street Journal wrote such a howler of an editorial that I feel compelled to.

The Wall Street Journal editorial board criticized the latest budget agreement for its increase in domestic spending, wringing its hands over the effect on deficits, while simultaneously praising defense spending, which the editorial board believes, for some reason, has nothing to do with deficits.

This, by the way, is the same editorial board that played head cheerleader for the Republican tax bill, which contained such mammoth tax cuts for the biggest corporations and the already wealthy that it will add $2 trillion to our deficits—$2 trillion. Huge tax cuts contributed more to the deficit than all of these spending programs put together, but the Wall Street Journal cheered on the tax cuts and now says: Don't spend for the middle class on things like education and infrastructure that have broad support in America and helping kids go to college. Don't spend on that because it increases the deficit, but it is OK to pass massive tax cuts for the rich and the big corporations that are already profitable.

So, for the sake of the record, the Wall Street Journal editorial board believes deficits are really bad but only if they are caused by investments in Americans' healthcare or education or infrastructure. When deficits are caused by defense spending and when deficits are caused by tax cuts for the wealthy, they are peachy.

The truth is, so many of my Republican friends have engaged in the same egregious bit of hypocrisy. So I have a few words this morning for my deficit-scolding friends Mick Mulvaney and the Wall Street Journal editorial board: A deficit is a deficit is a deficit. They try to make the argument that massive tax cuts won't create a deficit, but all the numbers that are coming in now and are projected in the future say that is just not true. If the Wall Street Journal really cared about deficits above all, they wouldn't have supported the tax bill.

When the Senate debated these tax cuts in 2017, there were several proposals on the table—many Democrats and Republicans supported them—that would have reduced taxes on corporations while remaining deficit-neutral. Many would have changed the Tax Code in ways I didn't support, but nonetheless they would have held revenues and expenditures in line. We didn't hear a peep out of the Journal to support those proposals—oh, no. Democrats even put together a deficit-neutral middle-class tax cut at the time, but Republicans ignored it and pushed through Congress a bill that lined the pockets of the wealthy—blowing a $2 trillion hole in our deficit. The Wall Street Journal could have said something then. They didn't. They were asleep at the switch. They were asleep at the switch then, and they are crying now.

The fact is, Republican tax cuts for the wealthy and endless wars in the Middle East, championed by George Bush and the Republican Party, are the big drivers of the Nation's debt and deficit, not nondefense domestic spending.

President Obama, to his credit, cut the budget deficit in half during his term. The last time we had a surplus was under a Democratic President, Bill Clinton. In fact, every single Republican administration has added to the deficit, while every single Democratic administration has shrunk it since 1981—Reagan, deficit increased; H. W., deficit increased; Bill Clinton, deficit goes down; George Bush, deficit increased; Obama, deficit goes down; Donald Trump, deficit going up. What does that say?

So, to the Wall Street Journal editorial board and my Republican friends who are silent about Trump-era deficits but rail against domestic spending, I say: Spare us. Enough. Enough with this deficit hypocrisy.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, on climate, I want to congratulate my dear friend, one of the most intelligent, hard-working, articulate Senators we have, SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, on reaching a rhetorical milestone. Usually ''rhetoric'' and ''milestone'' don't go together, but in his strong eloquence on the environment, they do.

Yesterday, Senator WHITEHOUSE gave his 250th speech on the subject of climate change. Many Members of this Chamber have yet to speak 250 times on the floor in total, much less on a single topic. Senator WHITEHOUSE's speeches have covered everything from sea level rise to polar cap ice melting and the effect of climate change on our economic security and our national security. He has diligently shone a light on the impediments to legislative progress on climate change, and he waxes fervent and poetic, condemning the web of dark money that funds fraudulent climate research and lobbies against climate action.

Much more important than Senator WHITEHOUSE's milestone, of course, is the issue he is talking about. Each passing week brings another proof point that climate change is happening