

Once again, the Trump foreign policy doctrine has proven reckless, senseless, and dangerous, full of gaslighting and bluster, a doctrine in which fact and fiction are one in the same.

It is shameful. It is terrifying that we have a Commander in Chief who comes to military decisions by virtue of temper tantrum and then announces them via tweet, a President who doesn't seem to care that if he keeps on the path of fire and fury he has been treading, our own homeland will be in greater danger, more wounded warriors will be sent to Walter Reed, and more fallen heroes will be laid to rest in the hallowed grounds of Arlington.

Donald Trump may never have deigned to put on our Nation's uniform, so he probably doesn't know that the commander's greatest responsibility is to safeguard the troops so they are able to carry out the mission. That means we do not send them into harm's way recklessly and without full support both logically and legally.

As a former unit commander, I ran for Congress so that when the drums of war sounded, I would be in a position to make sure our elected officials fully consider the true costs of war, not just in dollars and cents but in the sacrifices of our troops and their families. That was the vow I made to my buddies that I deployed with and all those who have served since I hung up my uniform.

Now, as the drums of war are pounding once again, I am here today to keep my promise to do our troops justice and to make sure Donald Trump does not outsource overseas yet another American job—Congress's job to declare war. If the Trump administration wants to go to war, they must bring their case to Congress and give the American people a say through their elected representatives. They must respect our servicemembers enough to prove why war with Iran is worth turning more moms and dads into Gold Star parents. They must testify about what the end state in Iran actually looks like.

Then, when their case has been made, when Congress's debate is done, we should vote. It is our duty. It is the least we owe to the troops we would be sending into harm's way. If the vote to authorize military force passes, then I will be the first person to volunteer to deploy. I am ready to pack my rucksack, to dust off my uniform. I am ready to fly helicopters, take on the grunt work, do whatever else it takes to uphold that oath that all servicemembers and veterans have sworn: to protect and defend this Nation we love, no matter what.

It would be nice if we had a President willing to do the same instead of one who thinks he looks tough by pushing us to the brink of a needless conflict.

Listen, Trump may think he comes off as strong by using phrases like "locked and loaded" and by spewing threats 280 characters at a time, but he has never seemed weaker to me. A real

Commander in Chief would not dole out matters of war to the highest bidder. A true leader would not bend to the whims of despots just because of the size of their bank accounts. A strong President would not care more about keeping tyrants happy than safeguarding our most precious resource: the brave men and women willing to lay down their lives to defend our Nation. Yet, day after day, Donald Trump wraps himself in the flag in the morning and then abandons our servicemembers and our democratic norms by the afternoon.

While he may have already shirked his duty as an elected official, I refuse to abandon mine. So as many times as is necessary, I am going to keep coming back to this Chamber, keep raising my voice under this great Capitol dome, and keep demanding what is actually in our Nation's best interest because, you see, I don't take my orders from war criminals or dictators or princes or monarchs. I don't serve foreign regimes. I serve the American people. Trump would do well to try that sometime.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, the Senate failed to advance a motion to proceed to a package of appropriations bills, demonstrating something that Leader McCONNELL already knew: There are not enough votes in the Senate for the President's wall.

The Senate refuses to fund the border wall that the President promised Mexico would pay for, especially not at the expense of our troops and their families and important public health programs like childcare and Head Start. Just yesterday, the Pentagon warned of dire outcomes if the money to fund the military is not provided.

Read today's Washington Post. Our military people are upset with this. Now, their chain of command is not going to publicly say it, but we know it. Over 120 military projects stand to lose funding, and we aren't talking about fixing parking lots. We are talking about military readiness. We are talking about medical facilities for troops in North Carolina. We are talking about schools for military families in Kentucky. We are talking about explosives stored in unsafe conditions. We are talking about a very important engineering lab at West Point to train our future soldiers. Even hurricane recovery projects in Florida are at risk.

The Defense Department was very clear that without this funding, lives would be at risk, but that is what Republicans on the Appropriations Committee proposed. The Senate rightly rejected that idea.

The Republican leader is saying we are hurting the military? Give me a break. We are defending the military. How much bull does the majority leader think the American public will swallow? They are taking money out of the military to put it in the wall, and he says that we are hurting the military? Oh, no. Leader McCONNELL is hurting the military, and we defended them. We defended them because we want the money to go to the military, not to the wall.

By the way, in that regard, Leader McCONNELL did not stick with the agreement. The agreement was not only on the 302(a)s but there would be bipartisan agreement on where the money on the defense side and the non-defense side would be distributed.

Instead of consulting Democrats, they tried to jam something down our throats, taking money out of defense, out of Head Start and other programs in the health and human services budget and put it into the wall. Well, that wasn't going to stand, it isn't going to stand, and it will not stand.

I hope Leader McCONNELL has learned his lesson. Shutting down the government or trying to eyeball for the wall isn't going to work. Let's roll up our sleeves and work together.

My friend the Republican leader and Chairman SHELBY have now shown the President that they tried again to fund his wall. They have seen, once again, that the votes are not there. They have seen, once again, that when the Senate Republicans do the President's bidding and refuse to engage the Democrats, the only thing they accomplish is wasted time.

The pattern repeats itself far too frequently. The same impulse to do the President's bidding—they are so afraid of this President—and that is what led to the 35-day Trump shutdown earlier this year. Let's not repeat that, Republicans. Let's learn our lessons.

The same impulse led Republicans to deny for months disaster aid to Puerto Rico. In each case, whether it be taking money out of needed places like the military and putting it into the wall or not being fair to Puerto Rico when it came to aid, they had to relent and work with Democrats. I am glad they did for the good of the country.

So enough time has been wasted this work period. Leader McCONNELL, Chairman SHELBY, let's sit down. It is time for you to sit down and negotiate with Democrats on the way forward.

(Mr. SCOTT of Florida assumed the chair.)

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. President, let's talk about the short-term CR, which was released last night. The continuing resolution is an important measure to keep the government open until late November and

allow appropriators to get a bipartisan agreement for fiscal year 2020.

One program that has not received enough attention is the agricultural relief program known commonly as the Commodity Credit Corporation. This is an important program that should help all farmers suffering from certain exigencies of the market, like price declines and natural disasters.

Unfortunately, over the past year, the President turned this important agricultural relief program that we all support into a giant slush fund. The relief payments have gotten political. Crops in red States have received outsized subsidies, while crops in blue States were shortchanged. Cotton, for example, has gotten a huge subsidy, compared to dairy and specialty crops, fruits and vegetables. The payments were not matched to the damage caused to each crop. Even soybeans, the supposed reason for this at the beginning, were greatly shortchanged for cotton, and even now cotton is being treated better.

In addition—and just as bad, if not worse—there have been huge amounts of waste and abuse in the program. Large agribusinesses, including some foreign agribusinesses, like a Brazilian beef corporation, are receiving funding through this program while American dairy farmers are passed over.

There are limits on the CCC program. If you make over \$900,000, you shouldn't get any money. The most any farm can get is \$250,000 if there are two farmers in the family, a husband and a wife. Those don't seem to abate either.

We are very pleased that Republicans acceded to our wish. Democrats were able to inject some transparency into the agricultural relief program.

In this short-term CR, we require reporting on whether the funding is going to foreign sources and justification for why money went where it did. We are going to look at this report before we move to the full appropriations bill in a month or two to make sure the money is going to our American farmers who need it—not foreigners, not wealthy agribusiness, not all slanted to one product like cotton when there are so many other needs.

This is a good victory for Democrats in a day of some victories for Democrats.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. President, there is another bright spot, election security. This morning, after months and months of Republican resistance and months of insistent Democratic pressure, Senate Republicans have finally agreed to support our Democratic request for additional election security funding in advance of the 2020 elections.

This is similar to an amendment Democrats offered during last year's appropriations process to help States harden their election infrastructure to protect against Russian or Chinese or Iranian interference.

A year ago, our Republican friends, unfortunately and shortsightedly, re-

jected this amendment. Maybe, just maybe, Republicans are starting to come around to our view that election security is necessary; that if Americans don't believe their elections are on the up and up, woe is us as a country and as a democracy.

It is not all the money we requested and doesn't include a single solitary reform that virtually everyone knows we need, but it is a start. Leader McCONNELL kept saying that we don't need the money. I made umpteen speeches here, in this chair, and the Republican leader denied the need. But now, thank God, he has seen the light. We need more money for election security; ask election officials, Democrat or Republican, throughout the country. I hope today's vote means Senate Republicans are beginning to see the light on election security.

While this funding is important, it is not the only thing we need to do to secure our elections from Russian, Chinese, Iranian, or any other foreign country's interference. There are multiple bipartisan pieces of legislation awaiting action on the floor that would counter foreign influence operations against our democracy, safeguard our elections, and deter foreign adversaries from even attempting to interfere.

We have been warned time and again by our national security leaders—nearly all of them Republicans appointed by President Trump—that China and, of course, Russia are potential threats in 2020. We cannot sit on our hands while our adversaries try to replicate and outdo what Putin accomplished in 2016.

Leader McCONNELL should bring the bipartisan bills. We are getting the money in approps, but we need more legislation to refine where the dollars are.

Leader McCONNELL, now that you have seen the light on the money, go one step further: Bring the bipartisan bills—the Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression Act, the Secure Elections Act, and the DETER Act—to the floor for a debate and a vote. Otherwise, the job will remain incomplete and our democracy vulnerable.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. President, finally on guns, yesterday, according to reports, Attorney General Barr came to Capitol Hill to discuss a one-page proposal on gun legislation that he had put together. It became clear soon after that the White House, seemingly out of fear of reprisal by the NRA, was unwilling to embrace its own Attorney General's proposal. Once again, the White House refused to take a stand on what they propose to do on the question of gun violence.

President Trump and Senate Republicans are trying to find a way to have their cake and eat it too—searching for a plan that the public will accept and won't offend the NRA. It is a fool's errand.

Leader McCONNELL, President Trump, you can't please the NRA and

at the same time do good gun legislation that will save lives. You cannot please the NRA unless you do something that is either regressive or, at the very best, toothless. Get it through your heads. That is how it is.

If you want to do something real on gun legislation and save lives, you have to reject the NRA's ministrations. The NRA is wildly out of step with the views of the American public. Its policies are reactionary; its leadership, recalcitrant and divided.

Look no further than the universal background check bill. Ninety-three percent of Americans, the great majority of gun owners, and 80 percent of Republicans support the idea. But not the NRA. As for yesterday's plan floated by the Republican Attorney General, a plan that would only modestly expand background checks, representatives of the NRA called it a nonstarter.

The views of the NRA and the views of the American public are fundamentally incompatible. President Trump, Leader McCONNELL, Senate Republicans, which side are you on? Are you with the NRA or are you with the American people?

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. 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.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, today Speaker PELOSI unveiled the House's plan to try to lower out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs. This, of course, has been a priority for many of us in Washington, including the Presiding Officer.

We have been working on it really hard here in the Senate. Actually, three standing committees of the Senate have now reported out legislation dealing with this issue: the Judiciary Committee, the Finance Committee, and the HELP Committee, or the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee. All are working together to try to come up with bipartisan packages to lower prescription drug costs.

These bills, of course, include ideas from Republicans and Democrats.

Mr. President, apparently, we have some technical difficulties here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I can hear you better now.

Mr. CORNYN. It sounds like we have fixed that. Thank you.

As I was saying, while these bills include ideas from both Republicans and Democrats, it shouldn't surprise people that in an area as complex as this, there are going to be some disagreements along the way. But that is what we do here: We work through those disagreements and try to build consensus.

While I know that it is only a bipartisan bill that has any chance at all to