

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Ms. ERNST assumed the Chair.)

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination Brian McGuire, of New York, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

UKRAINE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I just listened to the majority leader come to the floor and tell Members of the Senate that they should close their eyes and box their ears to the current scandal that is engulfing the White House and the Trump administration. I heard the majority leader accuse Democrats of “politicizing” President Trump’s demand that the Government of Ukraine interfere in the 2020 election. That is a laughable charge, and it is not going to silence us on this matter of grave importance.

First of all, I have no idea what it means to politicize something these days. News flash: We are politicians. We practice politics. That is our job. I get told very often that I am politicizing gun violence when I suggest that maybe we should pass laws in order to change the daily trajectory of violence in this country. Yet the very reason we are here is to protect the safety of our constituents and to protect the sanctity of our democracy.

What we are standing up for right now is the rule of law, and I hope, over the course of this week, my Republican colleagues will join us in that basic responsibility that Members of the Senate and House of Representatives have.

We see the rule of law slipping away from us right now. We see our Nation being turned into a banana republic where the President can do anything he wants and turn the organs of state into his permanent political machine—his means of crushing his opponents. Today we see that many of my Republican colleagues are not just letting it happen but facilitating it.

There has to be a line that the President cannot cross. There has to be a moment when we all stand up and say: This has gone too far.

The President has admitted this weekend to asking a foreign leader to open an investigation into one of his political opponents as a means of advancing himself politically. That is not allowed in a democracy. That fundamentally corrupts the foreign policy of our Nation. It makes us all less safe when foreign governments now wonder whether they are going to be enlisted into the political operation of the President of the United States. This has always been a no-go area for Democratic and Republican administrations because we understand the vast power the Presidency has. If the President chooses to use that power and the leverage he has over people in this country and in other countries to do his political bidding, then there is nothing to protect any of us from the executive branch.

The idea that the President can openly admit that he is asking a foreign government to get involved in his political reelection campaign—and believe that he will get away with it—suggests a belief in the impunity surrounding his office. We should all be concerned about that.

At the very least, if my Republican colleagues don’t share my grave alarm at the disclosures of the last 48 hours, then we should at least agree that the whistleblower complaint needs to come before the Congress unredacted. There is no fuzzy penumbra around this law. It is clear as day. If a whistleblower makes a complaint that is deemed urgent in nature, it must be presented to the Congress. The President cannot hold it back; the executive branch cannot make it a secret.

What makes it worse is that the President seems to be playing a game with this whistleblower complaint. He seems to be teasing out little bits of information that are contained in it here and there in order to play to his political advantage. It is even worse than holding back the complaint from us. He is now using pieces of it to try to gain advantage over his political opponents.

At the very least, over the next 24 hours, we need to come to a conclusion that the law needs to be followed. If the President can withhold from us whistleblower complaints that are not

flattering to him—that potentially implicate him—then what is the point of having a whistleblower law? What is the point of having a process to protect people who are uncovering corruption in the administration if the administration can keep those complaints secret?

Let’s just be honest. If this President gets away with it, the next Democratic President can get away with it, and the next Republican President can get away with it. We will have lost all of our power to see into the wrongdoing of an administration. There will be a day when Republicans want to see into potential wrongdoing of an administration of the opposite party, but that will be all gone if we don’t, at the very least, come to the conclusion that we need to see it as the law states.

That is just the beginning because I think—as the President has advertised—that complaint is going to show he did, indeed, try to pressure a foreign government to conduct investigations into one of his political opponents. I think this is a really serious moment for the country. I think it is a really serious moment for the prerogatives of the article I branch.

I understand that my Republican colleagues may not be ready to talk about consequences for the administration for their wrongdoing, but, at the very least, we need to come together and make sure we have all of the information necessary.

By the way, it doesn’t end with the whistleblower complaint because the whistleblower complaint is likely going to raise even more questions that we are going to have to answer. We have a duty to then go out and find additional information.

For many, the President’s admission of guilt may be enough to make a determination about what the next steps are. But for those who aren’t persuaded that there have to be consequences for the President’s admission of corruption, then we should use the organs at our disposal to try to figure out the rest of the details surrounding this incident or series of incidents. What kinds of contacts have the President’s representatives been having with the Ukrainian Government? Has the State Department been involved in trying to do the President’s political bidding in and around Ukraine? How many people in the administration knew about this? Who tried to stop it? Who has been involved in keeping the whistleblower complaint from us? There are so many questions that need to be answered here, and it should be our responsibility to get to the bottom of all of them.

I think this is a really serious moment for this country. I think the minute the President is able to turn the foreign policy of this Nation into a vehicle for his own political advancement is the day that democracy, as we know it, slips away from us. If we aren’t ready to have a bipartisan conversation about consequences and remedies this week, then let’s at least have

some bipartisan consensus in the way that this place used to have all the time, making sure that we have all of the information necessary to move forward.

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

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes.

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

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, we have heard some deeply disturbing revelations in recent days about President Trump's efforts to tie congressionally appropriated security funding for Ukraine hostage to its government's willingness to investigate his political opponents here at home. The alleged threat by President Trump to withhold vital security funding from Ukraine came out last week in press reports about a whistleblower complaint from a U.S. intelligence official. These revelations suggest a gross abuse of power unlike anything I have ever seen during my 27 years of working on U.S. foreign policy. They also show Donald Trump once again welcoming a foreign power to influence our elections, this time using the power of the White House.

As of today, the Acting Director of National Intelligence has refused to comply with the law that requires him to share this whistleblower complaint with Congress. Yet that hasn't stopped multiple members of the President's inner circle from all but confirming that the President pushed Ukrainian President Zelensky to open an investigation into former Vice President Joe Biden. They have, together, engaged in a disturbing effort to convince the American people that this sort of behavior is somehow normal.

We first watched the President's personal lawyer admit on CNN that he had raised this issue of investigating Biden on the President's behalf. Then, yesterday, we saw Secretary Pompeo sink to a new low when he defended this behavior on national TV. Then it was the President himself who admitted it to reporters—the President himself. I am not sure what more evidence we need, folks.

Where are my Republican colleagues? Where are those supposed defenders of democracy and freedom? Where are the advocates for a strong relationship with Ukraine? They are silent, shamefully silent.

For more than 2 months, the President held up \$391 million in urgently needed security assistance for Ukraine—assistance that was appropriated by the Senate with broad bipar-

tisan support. Congress didn't pass this funding so that the President could sit on it. We didn't pass this funding so that the President could use it as leverage to get Ukraine to investigate his political opponents. We passed this funding because Ukraine needs our support against relentless Russian aggression and because providing that support is in the interest of our own national security goals.

Many of us were certainly not surprised to see this administration delay assistance to Ukraine given the President's repeated cowering to Moscow on the international stage. Yet, for 2 months, we wondered exactly why this money was being held from Ukraine. Now we know. The President withheld this money all in the hopes that the Ukrainian Government would open a bogus investigation into Vice President Biden's son. How is that not an abuse of power?

I welcome efforts in the House to fully investigate the role of the President's personal lawyer in pressuring a foreign country to investigate the family of a potential political opponent. I urge the Senate to follow suit because a legitimate President would never allow his lawyer to override bipartisan support for Ukraine. A legitimate President would not let his personal lawyer compel foreign powers to interfere in our political process. A legitimate President would not withhold congressionally appropriated funding to Ukraine to advance his reelection prospects. So I am calling for a series of measures today to get to the bottom of this.

First, I call upon the inspector general of the State Department to review the withholding of security assistance for Ukraine. This review must include the extent to which the Department was aware of or was part of the decision to withhold these funds and whether our foreign assistance laws were broken. The inspector general must also examine whether the State Department knew why the administration was withholding these funds and highlight any communications between the White House and the State Department on this matter.

Second, I call upon the State Department to provide all details and records about any support in any form provided from the Department for the President's personal lawyer's efforts in Ukraine. We, likewise, need to know about any briefings the President's personal lawyer provided to Department personnel and his interactions with Ukrainian officials.

Third, I call on the Office of Management and Budget to tell Congress why it sat on Ukraine's security assistance for more than 2 months. It typically takes the OMB just 5 days to review notifications from the implementing agencies. To sit on a notification for more than 2 months is unorthodox, unprecedented, and unacceptable.

Fourth, I call upon the Senate Committees on Foreign Relations, Appro-

priations, Armed Services, and the Select Committee on Intelligence to immediately hold hearings on the President's purported use of security assistance to pressure Ukraine to open an investigation into a political opponent. I urge Chairman RISCH to fulfill his commitments to hold a hearing on Russia and a markup on Russia sanctions soon.

If President Trump had used money to coerce another person to perform some corrupt action on his behalf, we would call it out for what it was—extortion. Are we just going to let the President of the United States extort foreign leaders? Are we going to let him reshape American foreign policy to advance his own personal and political goals? Is this not a gross abuse of Presidential power? If not, then what is? These committees have a responsibility to ask these questions, and they have a constitutional responsibility to do their jobs.

The Senate, as a whole, has an obligation to get to the bottom of this. Do my Republican colleagues really think it is OK to ask a foreign power to pursue unfounded allegations against a political opponent? Is this the new normal? I hope not. This is behavior that we have never seen from an American President. Unfortunately, it is behavior that fits into President Trump's broader pattern of surrendering to his patrons in Moscow.

I wish I could say that extorting Ukraine were the only way Donald Trump corrupted our national security over the course of the summer, but that is just not the case. Last month, President Trump also redirected funding for the European Deterrence Initiative to his ridiculous border wall. Funding for the European Deterrence Initiative helps our allies counter the kind of Russian malign influence that was deployed by Putin against our democracy in 2016.

It is well known by now that President Trump was lying when he said that Mexico would pay for the wall. To this day, he refuses to own up to this lie, so much so that he is willing to siphon dollars away from our military and abandon our most vital democratic allies in Europe to pursue a medieval vanity project. It is yet another example of his selling out our national security to curry favor with his political base.

Over the past few weeks, my office has heard from several European Embassies that are now stuck holding the bill for Trump's wall. While you won't hear it from them publicly because they, too, fear a backlash from this President, they are offended and angry about this decision. It is simply astounding. We are talking about the allies that Americans fought and died for in order to defend democracy, worked so hard to rebuild after World War II, and continued to protect during the Cold War.

I am sure the Kremlin couldn't be happier. To Putin, this must be a

stroke of genius. Trump is killing two birds with one stone by redirecting these funds. He is dividing us from our European allies in the face of Russian aggression and dividing the American people with his politics of hate. I have said it before, and I will say it again: Investing in Donald Trump's candidacy was the best decision Putin ever made. His patron at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue will stop at nothing to repay the debt. It might indeed be the only debt businessman Donald Trump has ever worked so hard to repay.

My friends, we have witnessed a real summer of love between Trump and Putin. Consider the G7 meeting in France last month. So clearly was the United States not the leading voice at the table. So tragically have we lost the confidence of our closest allies, and so predictably did our President once again make an appeal on behalf of his patron in Moscow by repeatedly calling for the expansion of the G7 to include Russia.

Sometimes I wonder: Does President Trump actually think that Russia is a democracy? Does he think that the Russian people live in freedom? Does he see Russia as an advanced economy? Does he believe Russia shares America's interests?

I have to say that little surprises me these days, but even I was taken aback to see him blame President Obama for Russia's behavior—on foreign soil, no less.

There is only one country responsible for Russia's removal from the G8 in 2014, and that is Russia. The Russian Federation was suspended from the G8 by its fellow countries because of its invasion and illegal occupation of Crimea, which is the territory of the sovereign nation Ukraine. Five years later, more than 10,000 Ukrainian patriots are dead. That is why Russia does not belong in the G8.

What has the Kremlin done since 2014 that could possibly justify an expansion of the G7? Has it suspended its illegal occupation? Has it behaved like a responsible member of the international community? Has it respected the sovereignty of other nations? The answers are no, no, and no.

Let's review Russia's behavior since 2014.

First—and on the top of mind for many of us—was Russia's sweeping and systematic interference in our 2016 Presidential election on behalf of then-Candidate Donald Trump, as is documented in the special counsel's sobering report. Spreading propaganda, manipulating social media, and spying on American election infrastructure is not the behavior of a G7 country.

Second was the Kremlin's chemical weapons attack on British soil—a blatant assassination attempt against a Putin opponent and his daughter. One British citizen was killed, and others required medical attention. This is not an isolated case. Just last month, a Russian citizen was gunned down in a park in Berlin at the suspected hand of the Russian authorities.

This is not the behavior of a G7 country.

Third is the Kremlin's complicity in Bashar al-Assad's war crimes in Syria. An untold number of Syrian civilians have been killed by Russian airstrikes launched in support of Assad. Those responsible should be tried in The Hague on war crimes charges. This is not the behavior of a G7 country.

Fourth, in recent weeks, Russian forces have ramped up their pressure on the country of Georgia. More than 11 years after Russia's invasion, the Georgian people suffer under its ongoing aggression. That is not the behavior of a G7 country.

Fifth is the recent Russian crackdown on demonstrators exercising their basic political rights. Throughout the summer, Putin oversaw the brutal beatings of children, women, and men and subjected everyday Russian citizens to arbitrary arrest and detention. What was their ask? What was their plea? That they be able to register their own local candidates for their own local elections.

The Kremlin's ongoing and too often violent oppression of the Russian people is not the behavior of a G7 country. No country in the G7 acts this way. This behavior is destabilizing, it is aggressive, it is authoritarian, and it does not belong at the table of democracies.

It is truly a disgrace that any American President would so easily discount all of what I have just described to win favor with his patron and pal.

Of course, these aren't the only gifts bestowed by President Trump during this summer of love.

Let's not forget how the President has delayed sanctions on Turkey over its purchase of the Russian S-400 system. Congress passed these sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA, in response to Russia's attack on our elections in 2016. We have these sanctions for a reason. They advance America's national security interests. They starve the Russian defense sector of much needed international business. By not imposing them, this President is both failing to hold Russia accountable and sending a dangerous message to other countries that they can buy Russian weapon systems without consequence. From the moment we passed CAATSA, this administration has resisted every step of the way.

So let's imagine, for a moment, what a legitimate American President, a President who is not a Putin puppet, would do in this situation. How would that person protect our country?

First, a legitimate President would not endanger the relationship with a key ally in order to gain political advantage at home. They would show solidarity with our democratic allies by providing all appropriated security assistance to Ukraine and funding for European efforts to counter Russian aggression.

Second, I am sure they would not welcome Russia back into the G7.

Third, they would impose CAATSA sanctions on Turkey and send a clear message to the world that the United States is serious about imposing pressure on the Russian defense industry.

So let me close. The United States of America must always stand on the side of democracy, human rights, freedom, and the rule of law. That is why we must secure our elections from the threat of foreign interference at home and defend democracies in the face of Russian aggression abroad.

That is why we must demand that security funding appropriated by Congress is actually delivered and that the sanctions we craft to counter our adversaries are imposed.

That is why we cannot be silent when an American President extorts foreign countries into influencing our elections or welcomes an authoritarian strongman's return to the G7.

I implore my colleagues to use the powers of Article I of the Constitution. We have to get to the bottom of these very issues and preserve the critical checks and balances we have in our Nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative 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 Brian McGuire, of New York, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury.

Mitch McConnell, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, Rob Portman, John Thune, Kevin Cramer, John Barrasso, James E. Risch, Richard Burr, James M. Inhofe, Lindsey Graham, Rick Scott, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Deb Fischer.

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 Brian McGuire, of New York, to be a Deputy Under Secretary of the Treasury, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).