

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 legislative clerk read the nomination of Barbara McConnell Barrett, of Arizona, to be Secretary of the Air Force.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I mentioned yesterday the contrast between our work in the Senate and what is transpiring over in the House.

On this side of the Capitol, we are focused on working for the American people. We are overcoming the Democrats' historic delay tactics and obstruction to confirm more of the President's impressive nominees for the executive branch as well as for the judiciary. Later today, we will confirm a new Secretary of the Air Force and will then turn to several impressive nominees to district court vacancies in order to continue our renewal of the Federal judiciary.

We will also keep working on the appropriations process and on providing the funding our Armed Forces certainly need, and we are discussing ways to discourage the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the Middle East and ensure the United States continues to provide the essential global leadership that has cornered ISIS and other radical Islamic terrorists and has kept our Nation safe.

So what is going on over in the House?

Those in the House are doubling down on their 3-year-old obsession of finding ways to nullify the decision the American people made back in 2016. Speaker PELOSI's Democrats are blocking the USMCA, which is the landmark trade deal that would create 176,000 new jobs for American workers. They are dragging their heels on funding the government, which is keeping our military commanders in limbo. All of their energy is going into this all-consuming impeachment parade that has been rolling on for 3 years now—ever searching for a rationale.

Remember, it was literally on Inauguration Day of January 2017 when the Washington Post ran this headline: "The campaign to impeach President Trump has begun." Well, the Post got it right. Before President Trump even took office, one prominent House Democrat had already declared he would not be a legitimate President. Just a few months later, another was already

promising she would not rest until she impeached him.

From the very beginning of this Presidency, Washington Democrats have lived in a state of denial. They have seemed positive that some inside-the-Beltway maneuver would save them from the consequences of Secretary Clinton's defeat. They had hoped Special Counsel Mueller's report would have validated their theories about the conspiracy between the Trump campaign and the Russians. They used their minority powers in the Senate to effectively try to nullify his Presidency by obstructing even completely uncontroversial nominees to all kinds of government posts simply because this President was the one who nominated them.

There have been 3 years of this. Now, finally, Speaker PELOSI's efforts to hold back her leftwing caucus have officially crumbled, and the House has thrown itself into impeachment.

Given the lip service the House Democrats pay in defending the norms and institutions of American Government, you might think they would at least run this so-called impeachment inquiry by the book. You might think the people who are trying to overrule the American voters and, from Washington, cancel out an election would conduct their process by the very highest standards of fairness and due process.

If you thought that, you would be wrong. Our Democratic colleagues have had their minds made up since long before this inquiry began. Remember, the chairwoman of one of the committees Speaker PELOSI put in charge of the process said in April of 2017: "I'm going to fight every day until he's impeached." That was back in 2017. So this is not about seriously discharging constitutional responsibilities. It is about the end result they have had in mind since day one.

Remember when the campaign to block Justice Kavanaugh began with protest signs with a big, empty blank for the name? It was a fill-in-the-blank protest before they even knew who the nominee was. Now we have the sequel with this fill-in-the-blank quest for impeachment. The Democrats' process already speaks for itself.

For the first time ever, Speaker PELOSI has simply ordered the House to conduct an inquiry into impeaching a President without a full vote of the House. Just yesterday, the Speaker doubled down on this unprecedented and undemocratic process by once again refusing to hold a vote on an impeachment inquiry.

Democrats have refused to give Republicans the same rights and fair treatment that Republicans afforded Democrats during the Clinton impeachment—things like equal subpoena power for the ranking members. Likewise, Democrats have refused to give President Trump's counsel the same opportunities that Republicans gave to President Clinton—rights such as at-

tending all hearings, depositions, offering evidence, and cross-examining witnesses.

We have already seen Chairman SCHIFF say in public that his committee had not been in touch with the whistleblower when they actually had been. We have seen Chairman SCHIFF bizarrely and brazenly fabricate what the President actually said to the President of Ukraine during an official hearing that he was chairing, only to claim that his fabrications were a parody—a parody—when Republicans called him out for it.

The same Democrats who are running this circus turn around and claim with a straight face that they are solemnly following the facts and the Constitution wherever it leads.

Give me a break. Give me a break. The entire country can see that that is not what is happening here.

And here is what else the American people can see: The Democrats would rather fight with the White House than work with the Republicans and the administration to pass legislation.

We need real solutions, like full-year funding for our Armed Forces so our men and women in uniform can receive their pay raise and our commanders can engage in long-term planning; real solutions like the USMCA, the major victory for American workers and American businesses that the Trump administration negotiated with Canada and Mexico but which Speaker PELOSI has blocked for months, with 176,000 new American jobs hanging in the balance.

Opportunities are right before us. Senate Republicans have been ready and waiting for weeks and months to do our part and actually make law on these subjects for the benefit of American families. We just need our counterparts across the Capitol to get serious about this.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, just when you think things couldn't get any stranger here in Washington, DC, a few weeks ago, Speaker PELOSI announced that the House was officially beginning proceedings to impeach the President of the United States. While the left has been dreaming of impeachment ever since the President was first elected in 2016, the timing of this was quite a surprise. In fact, last January the Speaker led the effort to table an impeachment resolution, and she and Chairman NADLER and Chairman SCHIFF and other House leaders had said that they recognized that this would never be successful unless it is bipartisan, and I think they were right then and they are wrong now.

We know that the announcement of the Speaker came at a time when the only thing the public knew was about rumors of a whistleblower complaint about a call over which virtually no one knew any details.

But the facts didn't really matter. This was about grabbing ahold of something and using this as a vehicle to do what the left has wanted to do since the President was inaugurated.

Were the initial reports a reason to look into the matter further? Absolutely. That is what the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence that I have the privilege of serving on did. We had the Acting Director of National Intelligence come testify. We had the inspector general come testify about his report.

But that is not the approach that House Democrats have taken. They made no honest effort to investigate before deciding to impeach.

Prior to the Speaker's press conference, in fact, we hadn't seen the complaint. We hadn't seen the transcript or heard from the leaders of the intelligence community. But regardless of the lack of any evidence at the time, they jumped into impeachment feet first. It is almost as if they were waiting for anything—any excuse, any reason at all—to do what they have wanted to do since day one in opposing President Trump.

This confirms to me that this is really not about the facts so much as it is a search-and-destroy mission.

Removing a President from office is no small matter. In fact, the Senate has never done so in American history. You would think that with so much at stake, our House Democrat friends would make every effort to lay out a careful, logical, fact-based case for the American people.

In fact, they said they knew they couldn't be successful unless this was a bipartisan effort, but they made zero effort to make it bipartisan by laying out the facts, by making it transparent, by letting the American people see exactly what was going on.

Ordinarily, you would expect hearings on every major network, witnesses presenting their testimony, subject to questioning by both Republicans and Democrats, and detailed reports of investigations. That is what you would expect, but that is not what we got.

Instead, we got secret hearings, secret witnesses, secret interviews, and secret meetings. But you know what goes along with that kind of secrecy—leaks and more leaks.

Chairman SCHIFF and his cohorts in the House have drawn the cloak of secrecy around this entire proceeding and then proceeded to drip, drip, drip a narrative to the press through leaks that would seem to justify their arguments, but that is not fair. That is not fair to the President. That is not fair to the 65 million American people who voted for President Trump. To try to negate an election through this sort of inappropriate process just defies logic and sense.

We have some idea of whom they are meeting with, but we have no idea as to the details they are talking about. That is because, instead of going through the Judiciary Committee, which would have been an open proceeding, ordinarily, Speaker PELOSI has grabbed this topic from Chairman NADLER and given it to Chairman SCHIFF, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, so as to have some sort of justification, as thin as it may seem, for doing things behind closed doors and in secret.

As I said, I am on the Senate Intelligence Committee. I understand that if there is classified information that can't be made public, that is a reason to have closed-door hearings, but there should be some effort to separate the classified information, if there is any, from the nonclassified information and have a public hearing on that part of the information the committee is given, not just closing the door, locking it, and throwing away the key, and keeping it all secret. This is really unjustified.

Well, we know that they have been busy. Chairman SCHIFF has been busy. We know he has been particularly busy on the TV talk shows and giving interviews to the media all day long, every day, and we know that there are bits of information being strategically leaked to the media, which conveniently align with their overall plan, and that is impeachment.

There have been no real and credible details about what has happened behind those closed-door meetings, and I would suggest that every American should be concerned. This is entirely contrary to our basic concepts of fairness and due process—to have secret witnesses, secret interviews, secret hearings, and then use that information to take one of the most dramatic actions that the Constitution provides for, and that is the removal of a President.

This is contrary to any concept of fair play and due process, as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights and our Constitution. You could be charged with a traffic offense and get more transparency and more due process than what the House Democrats are providing to President Trump, because that is what the Constitution requires.

Because the Speaker made a decision to impeach President Trump based at the time solely on rumors and second-hand information, I am left with very little optimism for the way this impeachment inquiry so far has been handled.

Now, there have been some silly hearings in the House of Representatives this year, but the American people should have the benefit of being able to watch these proceedings and draw their own conclusions. They don't have to believe what the press tells them based on strategic leaks. They don't have to believe what Chairman SCHIFF and Speaker PELOSI say. They can judge the facts for themselves.

When it comes to impeachment, arguably one of the most serious responsibilities under our Constitution for Congress, House Democrats have simply drawn the cloak of secrecy around their investigation. Of course, you know what the logical questions are to this sort of bizarre proceeding—questions like this: What are they hiding? What are they afraid of? What is it that they don't want the American people to see?

Of course, as I said, there are going to be some sensitivities and, perhaps, even some classified information, particularly when you are talking about foreign policy.

But the President has already made the key documents public. He has declassified the conversation he had with President Zelensky, and we have seen the report of the inspector general.

This secrecy veil seems to be more of a necessary tool to cloak information that doesn't align with their narrative. They simply don't want people to hear all sides of the story.

I have no doubt that if the facts were on their side, they would allow this process to be in the open. If they actually thought that transparency would benefit them, they would throw the doors wide open and do it out in public and let the American people judge it for themselves, and if facts were on their side, they would then hold a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives authorizing this impeachment inquiry, which has been done each time in the past. But from what we read, Speaker PELOSI is trying to protect her vulnerable House Members from being held accountable for their vote, particularly those in swing districts that won in 2018. So this is more another part of the political calculation at work here.

Instead, what they are doing is constructing this narrative behind closed doors and handpicking which information to leak and which to keep secret.

A true and honest investigation means following the facts where they may lead, gathering evidence, and giving the American people access to that information at every step, but that is a far cry from what is happening today.

While House Democrats are freely leaking the details of the impeachment process to the media, they are being unfair to the American people, particularly the 65 million people who voted for President Trump in the first place—but not just them. We all understand that in elections you win some and you lose some. Even the people who didn't vote for President Trump, I believe, would be committed to a fair process, particularly when going through something as serious as the potential impeachment and removal of a duly elected President of the United States.

What they want to do is to undo the 2016 election, but they should at least have the courage to do it out in the open.

We know what is happening as a result of the Democrats devoting 100 percent of their time and energy to reversing the results of the 2016 election by impeaching President Trump. Their constituents sitting at home are wondering what it is they are actually going to be able to accomplish.

When we have elections, ordinarily candidates run for office and say: If you elect me, I will do this, this, and this. The House Democrats have given up on that. Forget their campaign promises. Forget what they told their voters in the 2018 election. They are all in on the impeachment and removal of the President. The rest of that stuff is just talk—at least that is how it appears.

There are a lot of important things we can and should be doing in Washington as opposed to this political side show. We have had many productive hearings and efforts on such important items as trying to reduce mass violence, which is something we are all concerned about, how to bring down costs and increase choice when it comes to our healthcare system, how to improve trade so we can sell the things we grow and make in America to markets around the world, and how we can continue this incredible trend line when it comes to our economy, where unemployment is at historically low levels and particularly African-American and Hispanic unemployment is at historically the lowest level in recorded history. Forget all of that. House Democrats are full steam ahead on impeachment, which will make it virtually impossible for us to pass productive, bipartisan legislation. It will make it virtually impossible for them to keep the promises they themselves made to their constituents when they ran for election in 2018, and that is a crying shame.

This is the final point I want to make. We are 13 months—13 months—from a general election. President Trump will be on the ballot. These folks, who apparently have never gotten over their loss in 2016, will have a chance to cast their votes again. So will the American people. We will be able to take a look at the Democratic nominee, along with President Trump, the Republican nominee, and we will be able to vote 13 months from now. But, to me, it says the Democrats are not particularly optimistic about the outcome of the 2020 election, given that choice, because they are not going to wait for the election to occur; they want to divide the country, they want to paralyze Congress, and they want to impeach President Trump 13 months before the election.

I hope cooler heads will prevail. Democrats should work with us to pass bipartisan legislation that will actually make our country better off rather than pursuing this purely political agenda of impeachment.

I think it is disgraceful the way the House Democrats have chosen to pursue this clandestine impeachment

process rather than focus on what is best for the American people. Let the voters cast their ballots 13 months from now rather than put our country through this divisive and ultimately futile effort to impeach and remove President Trump.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

CONGRATULATING THE ST. LOUIS BLUES

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to talk about a very different topic, and that is the Stanley Cup. Yesterday at the White House, the St. Louis Blues were warmly welcomed by the President in a ceremony celebrating their Stanley Cup victory. On June 12, the Blues made history when they defeated the Boston Bruins in game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final.

It was hard to imagine at the beginning of this season that the Blues could have done this. They were the lowest ranked team in the National Hockey League. I think there was a time in the month of January when the odds that the Blues would win the Stanley Cup were 150 to 1. I am not particularly a betting man, but knowing what I know now, we wouldn't have had to put much money on that bet to have won a significant amount of money. As it turned out, however, as you and I know in what we do here and what we have done in our lives, the odds are not really what count; what counts is how you play the season. Just like we often say in politics, candidates matter. In hockey, in sports, the players matter. How they come together as a team matters. Whether or not that team really becomes a team matters, and this one did.

It was a season for the Blues that was filled with record-breaking achievements. Jordan Binnington became the first and only rookie goalie to win 16 games in the Stanley Cup playoffs. Ryan O'Reilly set a franchise record with 23 points in the playoffs and was named the postseason most valuable player. Game 7 of the Stanley Cup Final was the most watched NHL game in 36 years.

For the first time in franchise history, the Blues brought the Stanley Cup trophy to Missouri to celebrate their achievement as the best sports fans in Missouri stepped out. Five hundred thousand people were there when the Stanley Cup parade was in St. Louis for the first time. Five hundred thousand people—in several States represented on the floor, that would be everybody in the State. Five hundred thousand is a pretty big crowd anywhere, as it was in St. Louis that day.

Today, the Stanley Cup trophy will be on display on Capitol Hill so that Blues fans in the area can get a chance to see this legendary trophy in person. The Stanley Cup has already traveled all over the world since the Blues won the Stanley Cup. Ryan O'Reilly brought the Cup to Ontario to share it with his 99-year-old grandmother, who is probably one of the oldest people to

see the Stanley Cup. But for sure the youngest baby to be put in the Stanley Cup—the record was broken when the trophy was brought to a mother and her newborn child at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis, the baby barely born, right there in the Stanley Cup, setting the new Stanley Cup “youngest baby in the Cup” record.

We will never forget the image of Laila Anderson. Laila, a young girl battling a life-threatening disease, in many ways became the No. 1 fan of the team. Laila, by the way, was at the White House in the Rose Garden yesterday, and she was called up to stand by the President and the Stanley Cup, with the team surrounding both of them. The night they won, she was on the ice with the players celebrating as the Stanley Cup was passed around at the end of game 7.

The day after the Blues received their championship rings, two players visited Laila to personally deliver her very own ring. I saw those rings yesterday, and they are just about as big as Laila's hand. They were big rings. Her name was inscribed on the diamond-studded championship ring that was given to her, which also included the words “Play Gloria,” which became the theme song, fight song, inspirational song for the Blues at the end of the season.

Blues fans have plenty to be excited about this season. The majority of the names of the players that are now etched on the Stanley Cup are back this year. The roster is even better with the addition of defenseman Justin Faulk.

We are also proud to say that St. Louis will host the 2020 NHL All-Star Game in January. That game, of course, brings together the most talented players in professional hockey. I know St. Louis is ready to welcome them, and we will all be excited to further solidify St. Louis's place as one of the great sports cities in America.

It has been a great year for Blues fans, and I hope the team will once again have the opportunity to visit the White House next year. This will be the first year of many years where those of us in the Missouri delegation will get to host the Stanley Cup in the Capitol.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. 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.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the House of Representatives continues to investigate the circumstances of the President's interaction with Ukrainian President Zelensky and whether he used the power of his office to pressure