

[If we don't keep the pressure on [in Syria], ISIS will resurge. It's absolutely a given that they will come back.

So make no mistake, the President's incompetence, his impulsiveness, his erraticness has made Americans less safe—Americans here in our homeland. Congress, today, must make the fact clear to the President in a bipartisan fashion.

We have the opportunity, my colleagues. The House passed a resolution condemning the President's decision by an overwhelming vote of 354 to 60. That means the vast majority of House Republicans—129 to be exact—condemned the President's decision in Syria. Leader MCCARTHY, Whip SCALISE, and No. 3 CHENEY all voted for it. They are as loyal to President Trump as anybody, but they saw the danger, the real danger. Today the Senate should, and I hope will, follow suit. We can quibble about the language, but I have no doubt we can agree on the basic message, and there is no reason we can't vote on a Senate resolution today.

Time is of the essence. To say, well, I would like to add this word or add this sentence, as Kurds are being slaughtered, as ISIS terrorists are escaping—no, no, no. No, no, no. We should move to the House bill immediately because we all know there is only one person who can reverse this, and that is the President. The greatest ability to make him reverse is an overwhelming message from the Republican side—House and Senate—that this is wrong. He doesn't hear that publicly too often from our Republican friends. He has heard it from the House, correctly and courageously.

Please, my friends, my Republican friends in the Senate, let's put politics aside. Today let's vote the House bill passed yesterday by them. There is no time to waste. Time is of the essence because the President still doesn't get it. Our meeting at the White House demonstrated that to all who were present. Hopefully, an overwhelming bipartisan vote in the Senate will break through to him. I strongly, strongly—in the strongest of terms—urge my friend Leader MCCONNELL and our Republican colleagues to allow a vote on the Syrian resolution today. Security, justice, fairness demand no less.

S.J. RES. 53

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on climate, as Senator CARDIN well knows, later the Senate will vote on his resolution of disapproval to repeal the Trump administration's so-called affordable clean energy rule. This is one of the few opportunities where the minority can force a vote on the Senate floor, and there may be no more worthy an issue than protecting our environment.

Four years ago, the Obama administration put in place new standards and safeguards for CO₂ and fossil fuel emissions from powerplants—the first of

their kind intended to meet the threat of climate change. Earlier in July, by employing shady science, the Trump administration so violently obliterated these safeguards protecting our globe, our world, and frankly a lot of the forests in my home State of New York. In its place, the Trump administration enacted a new rule that will allow big polluters to wreck our air, dirty our water, and poison our Earth with little or no accountability.

Thanks to this new rule, common-sense limits on carbon emissions have been blurred, and deadlines for implementing the reductions have now been tripled or even quadrupled, but time is running out for the United States to meet the existential threat posed by climate change. That is why this rule is such a grave mistake.

Thankfully, in this case, the minority can do something under the Congressional Review Act. We are allowed to overturn some of the rules this administration unilaterally put in place. Later this morning, we will vote on Senator CARDIN's resolution of disapproval, which, if passed, will repeal the Trump's administration's destructive rule and reinstitute the safeguards that were originally in place.

Our Republican colleagues have a choice. They can either stop the rollback of lifesaving environmental protections or they can side with energy companies that put their fortunes ahead of our future. The choice is theirs.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, one final note. Today marks 1,000 days of President Trump's time in office. If we were to summarize his administration over the last 2½ years in a single phrase, it would be this: broken promises to working people.

When Candidate Trump ran for office, he promised to drain the swamp, but after 1,000 days as President, this place is the swampiest it has ever been, with conflicts of interest crippling this administration and inexperienced billionaires running our government.

Candidate Trump promised health insurance for everybody, but after 1,000 days as President, costs are higher, coverage is skimpier, and his administration is suing to repeal the healthcare we have in place and send prices skyrocketing for millions.

President Trump promised a tax bill that would be a middle-class miracle, but the only miracle this has been has been to corporate America, which uses it for stock buybacks instead of increasing salaries for their workers, increasing their investments in plant and equipment. So much of these tax breaks went to buybacks. Shame.

One thousand days in, President Trump has failed to follow through on promise after promise to working Americans, but he isn't the only one at fault. Democrats have fought to do the work of the American people, but as

the House passes things, Leader MCCONNELL and my Senate Republican colleagues have simply turned this Chamber into a legislative graveyard, where good ideas that would help the middle class and those trying to get to the middle class just come to die.

We could be reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act; we could be voting on election security; we could be voting on background checks, but Leader MCCONNELL has buried hundreds of House bills in his legislative graveyard.

After 1,000 days since President Trump took office, he and his Republican colleagues have made clear whose side they are on. If you are ultrarich, you are very powerful, you have great connections, it has been a great few years, but for everyone else, it has been a string of disappointing, broken, and heartbreaking promises. Come next year, the American people will have a chance to vote for real change.

I yield the floor.

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.

MEASURE DISCHARGED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, S.J. Res. 53 is discharged from committee.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY RELATING TO "REPEAL OF THE CLEAN POWER PLAN; EMISSION GUIDELINES FOR GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM EXISTING ELECTRIC UTILITY GENERATING UNITS; REVISIONS TO EMISSION GUIDELINES IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS"

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I move to proceed to S.J. Res. 53.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 53) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to "Repeal of the Clean

Power Plan; Emission Guidelines for Greenhouse Gas Emissions From Existing Electric Utility Generating Units; Revisions to Emission Guidelines Implementing Regulations”.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 53) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to “Repeal of the Clean Power Plan; Emission Guidelines for Greenhouse Gas Emissions From Existing Electric Utility Generating Units; Revisions to Emission Guidelines Implementing Regulations”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until noon is equally divided.

The Senator from Maryland.

REMEMBERING ELIJAH CUMMINGS

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, as the senior Senator from Maryland, I want to comment on the remarks by Leader SCHUMER about the great loss we had that we learned about early this morning—the death of Congressman ELIJAH CUMMINGS. I found out about this as I awoke this morning. It is a sad day for Baltimore, for Maryland, and for our country.

Two days ago, I had a chance to talk with Maya Rockey Moore Cummings, Congressman CUMMINGS’ wife, to inquire as to how the Congressman was doing. She explained to me that he was still in the hospital but he was using every ounce of energy he had to carry out his responsibilities as chairman of the Oversight Committee and as a Member of the House of Representatives. We all know that he used his energy every day on behalf of the people he represented.

Our Nation has lost one of the great champions for social justice. What a powerful voice he was for those whose voices would otherwise not have been heard. It is a great loss. It is a great loss for the people of Baltimore—his record of accomplishment on behalf of our city and our region is well known—and it is a personal loss for me.

I first got to know ELIJAH CUMMINGS when he was elected to the Maryland General Assembly. I was speaker of the house. I recognized that here was a person coming in with incredible talent. I gave him an opportunity to use that talent, and he used it so effectively on behalf of the people of his district as a member of the Maryland General Assembly.

Congressman CUMMINGS and I have a lot in common. We both attended the same public high school in Baltimore City, Baltimore City College High School—different years. He graduated

from the University of Maryland Law School, and I also graduated from the University of Maryland Law School. We served together in the Maryland General Assembly, and we served together in the House of Representatives.

God gave him the talent to communicate like no one I have heard. There was incredible passion in his voice. I had the opportunity to see firsthand what he was able to accomplish on behalf of the people. What a legacy. He used every moment. He achieved the high position of chairman of the Oversight Committee but never lost his sense of purpose for the people he represented. He went home to Baltimore every night. You could see him in the community every day at schools and at church. He never lost the passion for the people he represented.

What a legacy he has left for all of us. We can’t fill the void that has been created by Congressman CUMMINGS’ passing, but all of us need to step up and help carry out that legacy of public service. It is a terrible loss for the people of our community and a terrible loss for our Nation.

Our prayers go out to Maya Rockey Moore Cummings and his family in this incredibly difficult time. We will commit ourselves to carrying on the legacy of a great American, our friend ELIJAH CUMMINGS.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, before I begin, I, too, want to join with my colleagues who have preceded me and just say how sad I was to hear of the death of ELIJAH CUMMINGS. We joined the House together. He got there a little before I did in a special election in 1996. I came in January of 1997. I always admired his fire and his dedication. He was a fierce advocate for his constituents and for the causes he believed in. The House will be a lesser place for his absence.

Our prayers are with his family and all those who had the opportunity to know him, his constituents, those he represented in Baltimore and the State of Maryland who are going to mourn his loss today and miss his presence for many, many days in the future.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Madam President, farmers and ranchers have gotten some good news on the trade front in recent weeks with the signing of a trade deal with Japan.

U.S. farmers depend on access to the Japanese market. It is the fourth largest market for U.S. agricultural producers. This agreement will remove barriers to the sale of a variety of products, from cheese to sweet corn, beef, pork, and wheat.

While this is very good news for farmers and ranchers, we have a lot more work to do on the trade front to help our ag community and to increase demand for American agricultural products around the world, and we should start by passing the United

States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement. Canada and Mexico are the No. 1 and No. 2 markets for American agricultural products, and preserving and expanding access to these markets is key to improving the economic outlook for America’s farmers. Over a year ago, the administration finished negotiating a strong deal with these countries that will help boost our struggling agricultural economy.

To start with, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement will provide farmers with certainty about what these important markets are going to look like going forward. One of the biggest challenges facing farmers on the trade front right now is the uncertainty about what markets around the world are going to look like. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement will give farmers and ranchers clarity on what trade is going to look like with these two key trading partners.

In addition to providing certainty and preserving American access for American farmers and ranchers, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement makes a number of improvements to the status quo. Of particular interest to South Dakota are the agreement’s dairy provisions. If you drive the I-29 corridor north of Brookings, SD, you can see firsthand the major dairy expansion South Dakota has experienced over the past several years. The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement will preserve U.S. dairy farmers’ role as a key dairy supplier to Mexico, and it will substantially expand market access in Canada. The U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that the agreement will boost U.S. dairy exports by more than \$277 million.

The agreement will also expand market access for U.S. poultry and egg producers. It will make it easier for producers to export wheat to Canada and much more.

I have just focused on the benefits for farmers. In fact, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement will benefit almost every sector of our economy, from the automobile industry to digital trade and e-commerce. It will create 176,000 jobs, and it will raise wages for workers.

Given the major benefits not only for farmers but for the economy as a whole, why hasn’t Congress passed this agreement yet? That is a good question, and the answer really is quite simple. By law, the House of Representatives has to take up the agreement first, but the House has unfortunately been more focused on political theater of late than on collaborating on measures that would actually help American families, and unfortunately it doesn’t look like that is going to change.

I heard the Democratic leader down here earlier sort of attacking the current administration for not doing enough on this or that. Well, the fact is, if you look at the economic statistics over the past couple of years, they

are pretty remarkable. Unemployment is at a historically low rate—3½ percent. Those are numbers we haven't seen in a very long time—about 50 years, as a matter of fact. The number of jobs that have been created since the President took office is about 6.4 million jobs. In fact—a very important data point—the number of people looking for work juxtaposed against the number of job openings in our economy—for the 17th month in a row, we have more jobs available—about 7.3 million jobs available—than those people looking for work—about 5.9 million people. That is a historically sort of unprecedented, if you will, statistic.

So if you look at the overall economy, things are in the right place. They are moving in the right direction. Wages are up—the highest level in a decade. The American people's pocketbooks, the things they care about, the things they talk about over the kitchen table in terms of their wages, their jobs, their prospects, their certainty about the future—those things have all improved over the past couple of years because of the policies this administration has put in place, coupled with the work this Congress has done to try to create conditions that are favorable to economic growth.

What does that mean? Well, his tax policy. We have cut tax rates for individuals and families. We have cut tax rates for small businesses that are trying to expand. We allowed them to accelerate their cost recovery. Those are both key incentives when it comes to investment and expansion. And we have seen the results of that.

We have seen regulatory changes made by the administration—in some cases cooperating and coupled with the steps we have taken here in the Congress—that have lessened the burden for businesses that are trying to invest and grow and expand and create more jobs.

If you look at the energy changes, energy policy, we have become energy independent—something that a decade ago or two decades ago, nobody ever anticipated was possible. As a nation, we are now actually an exporter of energy—a remarkable change over a short period of time. I would argue that is largely due to changes in policy that have enabled and encouraged that kind of investment in energy, regulatory changes that have lessened the regulatory burden and made it less expensive and less difficult to create jobs in this country rather than more expensive and more difficult, which is what we particularly saw in the past administration, and lowered the tax burden in a way that provides incentives for people to invest, to grow their company, to pay better wages, and to add jobs.

Those are the types of policy changes that have been made that have resulted in the economic data and statistics we are looking at today. They are not just data and statistics; they are actually being felt by people across this coun-

try. So it begs the question as to why, then, another step that we could take on that road to economic progress hasn't been taken yet. Why, 320 days after the President signed the U.S.-Canada-Mexico Free Trade Agreement, has that not been taken up and passed by the House of Representatives? I would argue that if they would take that up and send it to the Senate, we would vote on it here. We would pass it. We would send it to the President. He would sign it into law, and farmers and ranchers in places like South Dakota and other agricultural States across this country would get the benefit from that. And it is not just farmers and ranchers. As I mentioned earlier, it is pretty much every sector of our economy. It is manufacturing. It is digital.

There are benefits in this trade deal that translate into a stronger, more robust economy that will keep this expansion going forward and will continue to create these good-paying jobs and higher wages and create that better standard of living and quality of life for people in this country. The reason it hasn't moved is because it is up to the House of Representatives. They have all the control on this. The Speaker of the House can move this whenever she wants to. What they are trying to do now is renegotiate the deal all over again.

Unfortunately, they are very much obsessed at the moment with other types of activities in the House. If you look at what is happening over there right now, it doesn't look like that is going to change anytime soon. With even the Speaker of the House joining the far left's now impeachment crusade, I don't think it is likely that Democrats are going to wake up one morning and decide they should spend less time on partisan politics and more time working with Republicans to pass real solutions for the American people. But I do hope they will not destroy this trade agreement. There are thousands of farmers in my State of South Dakota and around the country who are waiting for the relief that the United States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement would bring.

Irrespective of what the distractions are in the House of Representatives at the moment and much of the partisan rush toward impeachment that is underway there, I hope they will figure out a way to multitask and will do what they should have done a long time ago, and that is to pick up this free-trade deal, pass it through the House of Representatives, send it to the U.S. Senate, where we can pass it, and send it to the President, where it can be signed into law, and the American people can continue to see the benefits of policies that are good for this economy, that will create more growth in our country, faster growth in our economy, better paying jobs, and a better quality of life for people not just in South Dakota but all across America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

DEFENSE SPENDING BILL

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to discuss the current partisan blockade. It is a blockade of critical military funding for our troops at home and abroad.

Last month, Senate Democrats blocked a key vote on the defense spending bill. We need to pass this bill to fully fund the Defense Department. By blocking the bill, Democrats are denying America's troops the pay raises that they have earned and that they deserve.

To add insult to injury, both parties in both Houses agreed a couple of months ago to give the troops this raise. We did it more than 2 months ago. In fact, it was part of the bipartisan budget deal that was signed in August.

By moving the Defense spending bill, Republicans are keeping their promises to our all-volunteer American force. Still, Democrats have broken their promise to the troops.

Why on Earth would the Democrats want to play political games with the paychecks of our troops? Under the harshest conditions, these brave men and women defend our cherished freedoms 365 days a year. America's servicemembers—our servicemembers—help keep us safe. They keep us strong, and they keep us, as a Nation, prosperous. Without question, they deserve our full support, and that support should be bipartisan. Why it isn't right now is beyond me.

Recently, I had the privilege of visiting Wyoming troops, our Wyoming National Guard. We have a very large deployment, our largest in 10 years. They are serving in Kuwait, in the United Arab Emirates, and in Kosovo. We have troop members serving, as well, in Afghanistan.

We have about 1,500 members in the Wyoming National Guard, and, right now, about 400 of them are serving overseas. They are from towns like Casper, Cheyenne, Guernsey, Laramie, Sheridan, Lovell, Moorcroft, Wheatland, and brothers from Sheridan and Casper. I met with all of them. Some 370 Wyoming Guard members are currently serving in Afghanistan, the Middle East, and in Europe. It is our largest deployment in a decade.

I was honored to spend time with these dedicated servicemembers from my home State. First, I visited the 115th Field Artillery Brigade Forward in the United Arab Emirates. It is in the desert across from the Strait of Hormuz. From there, I traveled to Kuwait to meet with our 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery. My father-in-law, Bob Brown, was a member of this group during Korea. He had also served in World War II, as I know, Mr. President, your father was part of the D-day invasion. I finished visiting with the troops in Kosovo, the C Company, 1st Battalion, 297th Infantry Regiment in

Kosovo, up near the Serbian border. In service to our country, these soldiers now find themselves far from home, and we owe it to them to give them the raise that they have earned and that they deserve.

You know, before I left, I gave every one of our soldiers a challenge coin. It is a challenge coin for me, as a Senator, and it is something I learned about through the military. It is something you give to somebody for camaraderie and a job well done. The coin shows the Wyoming iconic cowboy sitting on a bucking bronco. I gave it to each one of them saying: You are from Wyoming, you are a cowboy, and cowboys never quit and never complain, and neither will the U.S. military.

So when it comes to a raise, they are not quitting, and they are not complaining. It seems to me that it is the Democrats who have quit. The Democrats have quit. They have gone back on their word to approve the pay raise that they approved a couple of months ago and now are blocking us moving forward with this piece of legislation.

You know, the troops I met invited the cowboy spirit. They love to see it. They don't need to see it for long because they have a lot to do. They are working 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and 365 days a year. They wanted to talk about what is happening at home. They wanted to talk about Wyoming football. They wanted to talk about the hunting season. They wanted to talk about the weather at home, where we have already had snow. The day I was in one of the locations, it was 108 degrees, and the heat index was higher than that, and they are, of course, in full uniform. They are there doing the job of keeping us safe and keeping us free, and they deserve the pay raise that they have earned.

They are on the frontlines. They are defending our freedoms. They are doing it every day.

I had a meal with them, as you see here right now, visiting with these men and women. It is a time for camaraderie. We talked about the challenges they are facing overseas.

I toured each of their bases. They know that the world is a very dangerous place in which they are living and serving, and they know what is happening in the threats to Iran, which to this group was only a little over 100 miles away, across the Strait of Hormuz.

Look, clearly, the best way to protect Americans at home is to keep up the pressure on our enemies abroad. Our presence there is restraining evil in the region. That is why our troops need our full support, and they need it right now. They shouldn't be placed at a point where they have to tolerate and wait for the Democrats to come back to the table and come to an agreement that they had reached and made promises on earlier this year.

With growing threats from abroad, the Defense funding bill delivers critical resources that our military needs

to keep us safe. One thing is crystal clear from my visit: The best way to honor our troops is to honor our commitments to them.

So let's give these men and women in uniform the raise that they have earned, that they deserve, that they are entitled to, and let's give our troops the state-of-the-art tools they need to protect the American people in a dangerous world. It is time for Democrats to lift their hold on this blockade that they have had on our Defense funding bill. We must work together, in a bipartisan way, to complete the regular Defense appropriations process and fully fund our military, as our Nation demands and our troops certainly deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from New Mexico.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, last month, both the Senate and the House of Representatives resolved, on a bipartisan basis, to terminate the President's declaration of a national emergency along our southern border. I was proud to lead the charge before this body to terminate that declaration—a declaration the President is using to raid congressionally appropriated military construction funds to build this border wall. Plain and simple, the President's emergency declaration is an end-run around Congress's spending powers and the Constitution.

Last week, a Federal district judge agreed and concluded that the President's declaration is "unlawful." Article I, section 9, of the Constitution could not be clearer. It reads: "No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law. . . ."

The Founders gave Congress the power to appropriate—the power of the purse. This is one of the most consequential powers. Congress has this power to make sure that decisions about how public dollars are spent have widespread support and are not the product of an extreme minority, let alone one man.

Our power to appropriate is part of the system of checks and balances built into our Constitution. The Founders made sure that the three branches of government exercised their own separate and limited powers, and they made sure that no one branch and no one person could exercise too much power, especially over the use of taxpayer money.

The President's emergency declaration is an unconstitutional power grab. Congress has not fully funded his requests for border wall funding. We set different budget priorities. Our priorities include the \$3.6 billion worth of 127 military construction projects across 23 States, 3 Territories, and 20 countries, and the President canceled them.

But this President will not accept Congress's judgment or our constitu-

tional authority. His emergency declaration is an exercise of power that is just not his under the Constitution.

Our system of checks and balances only works if each branch has the will to check the other branch if there is encroachment. We have seen some good bipartisan pushback, but this is the point where we need more of that. It is up to Congress, the legislative branch, to guard our constitutional authority and to exercise the will to do so.

The President has now vetoed Congress's resolution, and it is up to this body to assert our constitutional authority and override that veto. Not only is a fundamental constitutional principle at stake, but the President's emergency declaration has real life impacts—impacts to our national security and impacts to the 23 States whose projects are now gone.

My home State of New Mexico is one of those 23 States. We are home to two military bases that will be hit by the President's raid on military construction projects to fund his wall.

Scuttled is an \$85 million project at Holloman Air Force Base that would improve drone pilot training facilities that are aging, have sinkholes, and bat infestation. Training our military to pilot drones is mission critical in this day and age. The Air Force is battling a shortage of these pilots.

At White Sands Missile Range, a \$40 million project designed to replace an aging and fire-damaged information systems facility has been cut. This project was to prepare the range to take on the next generation of missiles and weapons testing, including future hypersonic testing.

Twenty-two other States are losing military construction projects, from Alabama to Arizona, North Carolina to Texas, and Maine to Florida. In Utah, the Air Force has sought a new control center at Hill Air Force Base to replace "structurally deficient" and dilapidated World War II-era warehouses for mission control. In Louisiana, the Air National Guard sought to replace an aircraft parking ramp in a New Orleans facility that exposes the public to an "unacceptable risk" of being impacted by an explosive accident.

In Indiana, Army servicemembers have worked in violation of safety standards for handling explosives and need additional space for munitions. In Kentucky, the military seeks to repair "substandard, deficient, inadequate, and undersized facilities" at a middle school at Fort Campbell that "impair the overall education program" for the children of servicemembers.

Not only is New Mexico one of the States hit by the President's canceling important military construction projects, but we are one of four States that borders Mexico. We are ground zero for the President's border wall and the havoc it will wreak on our communities, our way of life, the local economies, landowners, and the environment. New Mexico and Mexico share a 180-mile border. This border passes

through three counties—Dona Ana, Luna, and Hidalgo—that are home to 11 percent of our State's population. A majority of the population in those counties is Hispanic. We have vibrant communities along the border and near the border, including our second largest city, Las Cruces, 45 minutes from Mexico.

We have two ports of entry—in Columbus and Santa Teresa—that are bustling with commerce, international trade, and hundreds who cross the border daily to visit family and friends, to go to school, and to shop.

I know our border communities. I can tell you for a fact, there is no justification for the diversion of military construction funding away from our troops and to this wall.

Now, I support smart border security and have voted many times to fund smart investment. New Mexico knows what real border security is: well-funded, well-trained, adequate resources; mobile assets; surveillance technology combined with well-staffed ports of entry that welcome commerce, visitors, and also asylum-seekers seeking refuge from horrific persecution.

The President's wall, at upward of \$25 million per mile, is not a smart investment. It is antiquated and is not designed for today's challenges. This wasteful approach contrasts to the sound investment we made in the Columbus port of entry. Commerce, personal vehicle traffic, and foot traffic have increased exponentially over the years. Customs and Border Protection needed more secure facilities. We pushed to expand and update this New Mexico port. For \$90 million, we greatly enhanced border security and added to economic growth. Now, that is a wise investment of taxpayer dollars.

In New Mexico, we are concerned about the land grab underway by this administration. They are pushing to expropriate private lands for the President's wall, and there are lots of landowners who don't want their lands cut in half or made unusable.

We can't get answers from the administration about what they are doing, and so Senator HEINRICH and I, along with Senator SCHUMER and Senator DURBIN, requested the Government Accountability Office to investigate the number of citizens who could have their land seized, the cost of property acquisitions, and the time it will take. I am pleased the GAO has opened an inquiry. Not only is there concern that the Trump administration will skirt eminent domain laws, but there is a real threat that environmental laws will be tossed out the window in the administration's rush to fulfill the President's campaign promise to build 500 miles of wall.

The wall would run through hundreds of miles of untouched, pristine lands that are home to wildlife like antelope, deer, and javelina. A wall will tear up these lands and their vegetation, cause erosion and flooding, and cut off migratory paths for wildlife.

The Department of the Interior is set to transfer 500 acres of lands in New Mexico, Arizona, and California to the Army for the President's wall, and 213 of those acres are in my State. The Department of the Interior is supposed to protect our natural resources, not endanger them with a border wall that will compromise their ecological value, destroy habitat connectivity, and harm wildlife.

The President's wall and his divisive rhetoric toward immigrants is deeply offensive to New Mexicans. We have strong family, cultural, and economic ties to Mexico. We are a proud multicultural State. Our diversity does not divide us; it defines us. It is our strength.

This body holds the power of the purse, not the President. Now is the time to affirm this constitutional power and affirm the appropriations decisions we have made for our own States and the Nation.

We should override the President's veto and make sure that legitimate national security interests are protected by seeing that the 127 military construction projects go forward on schedule.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, the next vote, the vote we will take in less than an hour, is a vote that would exercise the Congressional Review Act, of which I am a supporter. The idea that we should use the Congressional Review Act is a good thing for us to look at what any administration does and determine if that is the right way to go.

Today, I certainly intend to vote to maintain the position that the administration has had on the affordable clean energy rule. This is a rule that will have a very positive impact on our State, just like the rule that it replaces would have a very negative impact. We are in the top five coal-using States for energy in our State.

With the Obama administration's rule, the massive energy regulations would have imposed billions of dollars in compliance costs that would have been passed along every single time that someone harvests a crop, flips on a light switch, shops for groceries, or walks into the door at work. Under the Obama-era rules, families in Missouri would have faced double-digit utility price increases; in fact, the average Missourian's average utility rate would have doubled in approximately a decade. A vote for this Congress review act would put that rule into effect, as opposed to the rule that replaces it.

These rules always have good titles. The current rule that the Trump administration has put into place, the Affordable Clean Energy Rule, would replace the clean power rule. That is significant. They both propose to do the same thing. One rule states they will have clean power; the other rule states it will have clean energy. The difference in the title is actually the dif-

ference in effect, which is one proposes affordable clean energy. It doesn't seem like a very tough decision: You either want affordable clean energy or clean energy that, in my view, is clearly not affordable.

What the new rule would do would be to look at individual sources of energy and decide from a selection of things that can be done, what can be done at those individual sources.

I was on this floor many times talking about this rule prior to the 2016 elections. It had been held in abeyance by courts that said, no, it went too far. The administration didn't have the ability to do what they were trying to do. When I was on the floor all those times talking about what this rule would do to our State and our economy and similar things all over the country, what I said was, the next time you write your utility check, just write it out of your checkbook again because, within a decade, you would be paying twice as much in Missouri for utilities as you are paying right now. The cost would have gone up, and it would have happened quickly.

Thankfully, President Trump and the administration—with the support, frankly, I believe, today, of Senate Republicans—will have charted a new course resulting in huge strides toward American energy independence. We are doing that on other fronts. In fact, September and August were the first 2 months in 37 years that we have been a net exporter of energy, not an importer of energy. Energy self-sufficiency is important, particularly when there is an all-of-the-above strategy with oil, natural gas, nuclear, wind, and solar as a part of the portfolio of energy that needs to grow, but doesn't need to grow in a way that cripples American families when they try to pay their bills or when they try to get a job. To become a net exporter of energy, we have done all those things while we were still cutting emissions. Carbon dioxide emissions in the power industry are down 28 percent since 2005, without the Clean Power Plan ever having gone into effect.

The EPA's Affordable Clean Energy Rule strikes exactly the right balance—in my view and, I believe, today in the view of a majority of my colleagues—between reducing emissions and ensuring that Americans can still continue to have access to reliable, affordable energy.

For many families, the cost of energy is one of the biggest items to think about when they think about their budget. In fact, for many families, there is not much to think about. You pay whatever you are paying for your housing, then you pay your utility bill, and you see what is left over. The luxury of having a technical budget with how you are going to do all the things your family would like to do doesn't happen all too often now. It would happen much less often if the utility bills are twice what they are today.

The action we take here today, supporting the affordable energy rule and

walking away from the clean power rule, will make a difference for those families. It makes a difference in the utility bill at home, and it makes a difference in the utility bill at work. Lots of jobs simply just don't work at twice the cost of today's utility bills. It is a foolish rule and has been properly replaced with a rule that makes sense. I urge my colleagues to maintain the rule we are headed to, rather than the one we are running away from.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today because our Nation is at a crossroads that strikes at the heart of our democracy. The increasingly outrageous actions of this President and his administration have brought us to this moment where we, as a nation, must make a decision about who we are, what we stand for, and what kind of behavior we will allow at the highest levels of our government.

As we continue down this road paved by the President's reckless actions and his complete disregard for our Nation's laws and democratic norms, I want to take a moment to step back and talk about how we got here and how much is truly at stake for our country and our democracy if we don't get this right.

Let's start by considering what we know for sure. The President has repeatedly sought foreign interference in our elections, which we should all find appalling. We know that President Trump and his associates pressed the Ukrainian Government to meddle in our democratic process, pushing them to launch an investigation without basis into the President's political opponents in an effort to help his election.

We know that he has made overtures to China—out in the open—to do the same. This is important. We don't have to take anyone else's word for it. We saw President Trump's call record with the Ukrainian President, and we all heard the President and his associates admit to the surreptitious actions from their own lips on camera.

These facts are indisputable and can't be spun. President Trump and his circle of friends have been clear about their actions and their intentions, and it is clear they are unacceptable, but even more seriously, there are still many questions about the extent of President Trump and his associates' actions and their potential impact on our democracy, questions for which the American people undoubtedly deserve answers.

That is why the House is right to begin impeachment proceedings to determine if President Trump has committed high crimes and misdemeanors,

and why months ago I, too, called on the House to open an inquiry to investigate the President's deeply distressing actions because, for me and for so many other people across the country, this is not about partisan politics or any politics. This is about maintaining our Nation's security and defending the rule of law. It is about nothing less than the future of our democracy. Let me be clear: Because of President Trump, all of this is on the line. That is how serious this is.

I have news for my Republican colleagues: As much as you would like to stay silent on this, it is not an option. Our forefathers warned us against the power of foreign interference to undermine the foundations of our democracy, and their cautions echo as clearly and as strongly today as they did more than 200 years ago.

As Members of Congress, as representatives of the American people, we took an oath to defend our Nation's security and our democracy. That is why the Constitution gives authority to Congress and the immense responsibility to provide oversight of the President's actions. Based just on what we know, it would be a dereliction of duty for Congress not to investigate the grave threats to our country's safety and to our democratic institutions.

If President Trump and his administration have nothing to hide, they should stop obstructing. Let Congress do its job and find the facts. Furthermore, if Congress fails to investigate these issues, it would set its own dangerous new precedent, essentially green-lighting this President's unethical behavior and his attacks against our democratic institutions for future generations of our Nation's leaders. That is a frightening notion.

We are now at the crossroads, and we have to make a decision. Over the coming weeks, the actions of the House and possibly each individual in this body will in large part determine which path we take. Will we allow foreign actors to interfere in our elections and undermine our security or not? Will we stand by it and allow this President and perhaps future Presidents to ignore our Constitution and mangle our democratic norms or not? Will we be a nation of laws or not?

I believe that this country is a country of laws, that our elections must be completely free from foreign interference, and that every elected official should ensure that these fundamental principles come before party or partisanship as this process moves forward.

There are other priorities Congress needs to focus on, important work we have to continue doing to secure our elections, which is all the more paramount given this President's actions. We will, of course, continue, as well, our efforts to lower healthcare costs and address the climate crisis and the epidemic of gun violence and more, but we cannot ignore what President Trump and his associates have done

and said and the impact their actions can have on our elections, our democracy, and the future of this country.

I sat in this Chamber as a juror in an impeachment trial before. It was a deeply serious undertaking, and one each Member took seriously before rendering a decision. That is the same seriousness that is required in this moment at this crossroad. If and when the House elects to accuse the President of an impeachable offense or offenses, the Senate right here will host the trial, and as Senators, we will all serve as jurors. If and when that time comes, I know I will approach it seriously, and I deeply hope each of my colleagues will, as well. Each of us will have to put aside every other consideration beyond the facts and focus solely on preserving the integrity of our democracy and upholding our solemn obligation to defend the Constitution. History will record where we all stand.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, there is very little question today that our democracy is under attack. The threat is not only from outside our country but from within with the threat to our rule of law, our basic values, and our democratic institutions.

From outside the country, that threat is reaffirmed by the Senate Intelligence Committee, which recently released a bipartisan report offering a sobering warning of fresh signs of interference by Russia and other foreign actors in the upcoming election.

The fact is that the lights are flashing red. The warning has come to us from multiple sources. Our intelligence community has warned us. The FBI has warned us. Our national security professionals have warned us. Still, the majority leader has refused to permit us a vote on commonsense measures that will better guarantee election security.

We need to move forward on these measures that safeguard our democracy from outside interference—cyber attack and social disinformation. And, of course, I have sponsored some of these bills. Many of them are bipartisan. We can move forward with that effort even as we confront the challenge and the obligation, which we must do in the ongoing impeachment proceedings.

What saddens and angers me is that in the midst of this crisis and the threat from outside our Nation from Russia and other countries, our Commander in Chief has essentially refused to believe that threat exists. He has in fact and in effect denied that there is any threat. That is what happened when the President used the power and authority of the Oval Office to pressure a foreign leader, President Zelensky of Ukraine, to investigate a political opponent, Joe Biden. This action is not only a breach of his oath of office and his constitutional duty, it is unpatriotic, immoral, criminal, and it is a

threat to our national security because, again, it invites interference. In fact, it pressures interference in our democracy. It validates and strengthens Vladimir Putin, not this Nation.

That is why the impeachment inquiry is being conducted by the House and why it is so important. Impeachment is not a remedy we take lightly or happily; it is a serious, last-resort remedy for the worst abuses of power and an unchecked, rogue President who cannot be held accountable in any other way. But the President has given us no choice. He may not be upholding his oath of office, but we must uphold ours.

The most powerful proof here comes from the words of the President himself in that July 25 conversation. There is no Member of this body who is unfamiliar with those words inviting, soliciting, in fact extorting the President of a foreign nation to interfere in our democracy. He involved officials at the highest level who joined in trying to cover it up, who now have a whistleblower complaint, as well as those call notes between President Trump and President Zelensky that repeat the President's own words. The transcript of that call is truly chilling and frightening almost beyond words.

When Mr. Zelensky mentioned that Ukraine was "ready to buy more Javelins from the United States for defense purposes," President Trump responded with, "I would like you to do us a favor though." That is a quote: "I would like you to do us a favor though." And the favor was, of course, interference in our election.

That kind of invitation emboldens not only the President of Ukraine but every other autocrat and tyrant who might seek similarly to interfere. Let us remember that what the Founders feared most was exactly that kind of interference, whether it was from the imperial powers that we had just fought and successfully won our freedom or dictators like Vladimir Putin or other nations that will be emboldened to interfere.

My Republican colleagues' silence will not age well. Not only are they unwilling to stand up to this President's abuses and threats to our democracy, the majority leader has refused to put those bills on the floor. He has outright refused to give us a vote on security legislation.

My bill, the duty to report bill, would require campaigns, candidates, and family members to immediately report to the FBI and Federal Election Commission any offers of illegal foreign assistance. It codifies into law what is already a moral duty and a patriotic duty. It is basic common sense. The law already forbids soliciting and accepting that kind of foreign assistance during a campaign; this measure, very simply, would require it to be reported.

I have told this body—and I have repeated it numerous times—that when FBI Director Wray came before the Senate Judiciary Committee, he

warned that the Russians are still actively trying to interfere in our election. But President Trump just said that if offered foreign assistance, "I'd take it."

Congress must pass this Duty to Report Act, along with other commonsense measures that support election security. Not only can we do it while we are considering impeachment, we must do it because the impeachment offense, in fact, involves foreign interference that these election security measures would help to stop.

Likewise, I want to mention gun violence protection. Senator GRAHAM and I and others in this body have worked hard over months on negotiating emergency risk protection order legislation. It could be passed along with background checks, and the two should go together.

The ball is in the White House's court. The President has shifted ground one way and the other, unpredictably and uncertainly, but I feel we can muster a consensus here. Even as we consider impeachment, we can move forward on a comprehensive set of measures that would help make America safer.

My goal, eventually, is to save as many lives as possible and as quickly as possible through those kinds of measures that would include not only background checks made universal and emergency risk protection orders passed by States with the incentives we would provide with this bill but also a ban on assault weapons and safe storage in honor of Ethan Song, a young man who was killed in Guilford, CT, because of improper storage of a gun that he and a friend were playing with. They would include a ban on high-capacity magazines and a reversal of the sweetheart deal that gave the gun manufacturers near-complete immunity. These commonsense measures can be done even as we consider impeachment.

Likewise, to take another guarantee of our values and the rule of law, forced arbitration clauses cause harm to millions of Americans every year. These clauses are often tucked into the fine print of lengthy consumer contracts and employee handbooks, with workers and consumers having no meaningful choice but to consent to the terms. These forced arbitration clauses, like that immunity for the gun manufacturers, denies basic justice. They deny Americans their day in court, and they deny public accountability. Consumers and workers are forced into unfair arbitration clauses where corporations can write the rules. They write the rules. Everything can be done in secret, and there is no meaningful judicial rebuke. In many cases, these clauses are paired with provisions that block Americans who have suffered similar harm from banding together in seeking accountability together in a class action lawsuit.

At the start of this Congress, 34 Senators joined me in sponsoring the FAIR

Act. This bill would render invalid or unenforceable any arbitration agreement between workers and consumers and corporations that governs employment, civil rights, consumer, or anti-trust disputes. It has an exception for those arbitration agreements that are the product of real collective bargaining agreements. It is hardly a radical proposal; it is a reform to give Americans access to the justice system again. Yet Senator MCCONNELL regrettably has blocked this bill and others from a vote. Senator MCCONNELL said: "As long as I am majority leader of the Senate, I get to set the agenda." Meanwhile, corporations are cheating workers, consumers, children, and families out of their day in court.

We need to move forward on these matters: gun violence protection, election security, the FAIR Act. We can do it because America wants it. We will go back to our constituents in this next election, and my colleagues who will face them will be asked: What have you done? We can answer with real action if we come together and move forward.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Dakota.

S.J. RES. 53

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. President, before we vote, I want to take a few minutes to express my strong opposition to what our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are doing with their Congressional Review Act resolution. They are asking the United States to give up a very good, responsible, and Affordable Clean Energy Plan and replace it with the old, Obama-era, illegal, and unconstitutional Clean Power Plan.

Prior to being elected to Congress, I spent nearly 10 years in North Dakota as an energy regulator and oversaw both economic and environmental policies and regulations in our State. I know something of this issue. For the American people, a fully implemented Obama-era Clean Power Plan would result in much higher electricity costs, less money in their pockets, fewer well-paying jobs, and just a lot less freedom. Across the country, their plan would reduce household spending by \$79 billion. It would increase electricity prices in my State of North Dakota by 43 percent, and it would cost over 125,000 jobs over the next decade.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing things about the Clean Power Plan that was presented by the Obama administration—one of the reasons, frankly, that it was deemed to be unconstitutional and illegal and had a stay put on it by the U.S. Supreme Court—was that in my State, under the proposed rule, we had a CO₂ reduction target of 11 percent. Yet, in the classic bait-and-switch maneuver, the final rule increased that 11 percent by 400 percent. The 11 percent, while illegal, was doable, but the 400 percent was ridiculous.

So make no mistake, right now, here in the U.S. Senate, the Democrats are asking us to vote to eliminate good

jobs, to raise the cost of living, and to take more money out of the pockets of the American people. For what? The United States does not need an unconstitutional Federal power grab, like this one, in order to lead the world in reducing our emissions. In fact, we already do. Emissions have been declining in the United States for nearly 50 years. We don't need to apologize for our action or inaction. In fact, we need to start honoring the innovators who have made these reductions possible in the first place. We should be encouraging them and incentivizing them to continue their work in order to pave the way for responsible energy production that will be used for generations to come not just here in the United States but across the world.

In the context of several issues, I often speak about needing to follow a Federalist model, the cooperative federalism that our Founders envisioned when they created the States. That is a model of State control, with Governors being in charge, not Presidents. This is under the umbrella, of course, of good Federal oversight and, of course, some authority. Yet States need to have primacy. Put those who are closest to the people in charge, give them the authority and the resources they need, and this model will produce the best results nearly every time, if not every time. The Obama era's Clean Power Plan is exactly the opposite of that. It is a Federal power grab that the States have rejected and, yes, that the Supreme Court has ruled a stay on.

By stark contrast, the affordable clean energy rule that has been put forward by the Trump administration, which is the rule the Democrats want to overturn today in favor of the unconstitutional plan that hurts the American people, is a win for North Dakota and for States across the country. It respects the law and restores the proper balance between States and the Federal Government. It also promotes energy security. Maybe one could even say it promotes energy dominance.

ACE, as it is called, gives States the flexibility to set their own emission standards. It focuses on energy efficiency improvements at individual powerplants, and it incentivizes increased efficiency for coal powerplants, which allows them to remain open. We have that important base of low-cost, reliable electricity in the form of clean energy.

This simple, responsible plan is what the Democrats find so abhorrent. With the vote today, they are asking us to scrap the affordable clean energy rule and return to a rule that is unconstitutional, that tramples on States' rights, that kills jobs, that raises electricity rates, and that does nothing substantial to reduce emissions.

I applaud President Trump and EPA Administrator Wheeler for having included Governors and States and innovators in the discussion before having made the final rule.

We cannot let this happen today, and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting no.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise to express my outrage with regard to President Trump's decision to withdraw U.S. troops from northeast Syria. This decision is dangerous, premature, and wholly inconsistent with what the facts on the ground in Syria and the advice from everyone—from our diplomats to our military advisers.

In just 1 week, President Trump has managed to undo 5 years of hard-fought stability in northeast Syria. Just 1 week ago, over 10,000 ISIS fighters, including high-value prisoners who targeted American victims, were secured in prisons throughout northeast Syria. We face, today, a very different picture. Several ISIS prisons are already unmanned as a result of Turkey's incursion, and it is estimated that over 100 ISIS prisoners have been released already. We don't know what will happen in those other detention centers that have housed ISIS prisoners.

One week ago, a limited U.S. troop presence of 1,000 Special Forces stabilized a population that was once terrorized by the Syrian regime and later by ISIS. These forces secured a region of Syria that controls over two-thirds of Syria's natural resources. American troops have, today, either left or are preparing to leave this area, and the Syrian regime is moving in.

Russian troops have moved into U.S. military bases, and over 160,000 Syrian civilians have already fled their homes as a result of the spike in violence that has been instigated by Turkey. It is so hard to watch the videos on television that show Turkey-affiliated fighters assassinating Kurdish forces—Kurds with their hands tied behind their backs.

I traveled to Syria a year ago last summer. LINDSEY GRAHAM and I saw firsthand the work of the combined joint task force, Operation Inherent Resolve. We saw the work its partner forces, the Syrian Democratic Forces, were doing, and it was truly remarkable. The United States owes a huge debt of gratitude to the men and women of the SDF who sacrificed over 11,000 of their own lives in fighting ISIS so we didn't have to sacrifice our own.

Because of this sacrifice, when we were in northeast Syria last summer, we witnessed communities like Manbij steadily recover and rebuild after 3 years under ISIS's brutal occupation, and the widespread appreciation of the U.S. presence among local, multiethnic residents was a testament to the im-

portance of our partnerships and our willingness to lead in times of crisis. As we drove down the roads, we saw kids flashing victory signs at our troops. When we were in the marketplace, we had people come out and tell us how relieved they were that the United States was there to help ensure that peace was being kept. We saw local governance taking place on the ground.

So it is incredibly difficult now to see images coming out of Manbij and the other places we visited in northeastern Syria. The Syrian regime has already moved troops back into this region, and Turkey's proxies, who are seemingly undeterred by the Syrian presence, continue to move into the city of Manbij with heavily armed vehicles. Meanwhile, Russia has spent the last few days touring and posting videos of abandoned, taxpayer-funded U.S. bases.

What is taking place in Manbij and in so many cities across northeast Syria is an insult to the thousands of American servicemembers who have risked their lives to help stabilize that region and support the fight against ISIS, and it could have all been avoided.

This really began in December of 2018 when the President said he planned to withdraw troops from Syria. That was after holding up for months the stabilization dollars that could have been used to make it very clear that we were committed to the region—to ensuring that ISIS wouldn't rebuild there and that there would be stability in northeastern Syria. We were committed to making sure the United States was at the table when Russia and Iran and Assad moved in and carved up Syria.

I ask unanimous to have printed in the RECORD the recommendations on the best way forward in Syria that were issued last month by the bipartisan Syria Study Group, which I helped to create.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States cannot avoid or ignore the conflict in Syria. From the outset of hostilities, minimizing American involvement in the war and safeguarding U.S. national security interests have proven to be incompatible goals. This will remain the case for the foreseeable future. The essential question before American policymakers is not whether the United States should keep or withdraw its forces in Syria, but what strategy and mix of tools will best protect the United States from the conflict's reverberations and advance American interests. This report sets out such a strategy.

THE SYRIAN CONFLICT AND AMERICAN INTERESTS

From the conflict's beginning in 2011 as a peaceful domestic uprising, experts warned that President Bashar al-Assad's brutal response was likely to have serious, negative impacts on U.S. interests. Given Syria's central location in the Middle East, its ruling regime's ties to terrorist groups and to Iran, and the incompatibility of Assad's authoritarian rule with the aspirations of the Syrian people, many worried about the conflict

spilling over Syria's borders. These concerns are now a reality. The Syrian conflict spawned a refugee crisis that has encumbered Syria's neighbors and roiled European politics, strained U.S.-Turkish relations to the point of crisis, led to direct hostilities between Iran and Israel, provided a vector for Russia's resurgence in the Middle East, and challenged international norms around weapons of mass destruction and the protection of civilians. Areas of Syria have become safe havens for al-Qaeda and its fellow travelers and home to the largest concentration of foreign terrorist fighters since Afghanistan in the 1990s. The conflict also fueled the rise of ISIS, prompting an ongoing U.S.-led military intervention. Eight years in, the conflict has not been meaningfully contained, nor has the United States been sheltered from its effects.

Events on the ground disprove the narrative that the conflict has been won by the Assad regime. The Syrian war, far from ending, is entering a new phase. As of this writing, the Assad regime and its patron Russia are pressing an offensive against Idlib that could spur a new humanitarian catastrophe and outflow of refugees. Tensions are simmering between the Kurdish element that dominates the U.S.-trained Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in northeastern Syria and the Arab populace of some of the areas under SDF control. Turkey is positioning troops to invade northeastern Syria, which would divert the SDF away from the essential task of preventing ISIS's resurgence. ISIS itself, down but not defeated, is already resurfacing as an insurgency and may yet attempt to retake territory in both Syria and Iraq. Iran and Israel, already locked in a low-level conflict in Syria, may escalate to open conflict, especially in the Golan Heights. The Assad regime and its partners may seek to cross the Euphrates River, which could in turn breathe life into the ISIS insurgency and allow Iran to consolidate its land routes from Iraq to Lebanon. All of these scenarios become more likely without U.S. forces in Syria and without committed U.S. leadership to avert these scenarios.

The Syria Study Group uncovered no easy solutions in Syria; optimal outcomes were left behind long ago. Yet the Group determined that the threats the conflict in Syria poses—of terrorism directed against the United States and its allies and partners; of an empowered Iran; of an aggrandized Russia; of large numbers of refugees, displaced persons, and other forms of humanitarian catastrophe; and of the erosion of international norms of war and the Western commitment to them—are sufficiently serious to merit a determined response from the United States. The United States and its allies retain tools to address those threats and the leverage to promote outcomes that are better for American interests than those that would prevail in the absence of U.S. engagement. Using those tools effectively, however, will require better alignment of ends and means—the former must be more realistic and the U.S. investment of the latter increased—as well as clear, consistent, and high-level political leadership. Sharp shifts and reversals in American policy, and the failure of senior U.S. government officials to prioritize the issue with their counterparts, have undermined American credibility and the effectiveness of U.S. policy.

ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SYRIA

While the conflict in Syria is often characterized as winding down, it is the assessment of the Syria Study Group that this is incorrect; in fact, the conflict remains dynamic and dangerous. In particular:

The liberation of ISIS-held territory does not eliminate the group's threat to the

United States. ISIS no longer holds significant territory in Syria or Iraq, but it is not defeated. The group has morphed into an insurgency with the will, capability, and resources to carry out attacks against the United States. ISIS will seek to take advantage of any opening, whether a reduction in U.S. counterterrorism pressure or discontent among eastern Syria's Arab population, to recruit new fighters and mount attacks. ISIS's terrorist ideology, or "brand," continues to hold global appeal.

The ISIS detainee population is a long-term challenge that is not being adequately addressed. Although ISIS has suffered significant casualties, many of its fighters—including thousands of foreign fighters—remain in detention under SDF management. If released, they will form the core of a new iteration of ISIS or a similar group. In addition, tens of thousands of family members of ISIS fighters are residing in camps in eastern Syria. The SDF has custody of both groups but lacks the resources and outside support to hold them indefinitely. U.S. and allied efforts to deal with this problem have suffered from a lack of political will.

Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups remain active in Syria and threaten the United States. Although ISIS has received far more attention, other terrorist groups are active and control territory, especially in Idlib. Al-Qaeda offshoot Hayat Tahrir al-Sham has formed a government in Idlib, which is home to numerous other groups, including al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate, Hurras ad-Din, and a large number of foreign terrorist fighters. The United States lacks freedom of action to conduct a full-fledged counterterrorism campaign in these areas.

Despite Israeli air strikes and U.S. sanctions, Iran continues to entrench itself in Syria; Russia and Iran show few serious signs of divergence. Iran appears to be pursuing a two-track policy of military entrenchment and political and economic activity designed to enhance its power and influence in Syria for the long term. Iran's activities have reportedly caused discontent among Syria's population, but the Assad regime is heavily dependent on Iranian support. Israeli officials believe that Israel's air strikes have disrupted Iran's attempts to move sophisticated weapons systems into Syria, but Iran's overall objectives appear unchanged and the risk of broader Iran-Israel conflict remains high. Although Russia has acquiesced to the Israeli campaign against Iran, there are few signs of a wider divergence between Moscow and Tehran regarding aims or tactics in Syria.

Assad has not won the conflict in Syria. The regime has recaptured large swaths of territory and now holds 60 percent of the country. However, its control outside Damascus is tenuous, in part because it lacks the forces to secure the areas it retakes, but also because it pursues punitive policies against local populations. In much of regime-held areas, civilians are subject to conscription as well as arbitrary arrest, torture, and execution at the hands of the regime. Crime and warlordism are rampant. The Assad regime is determined to retake Idlib and is receiving Russian assistance to do so, but so far it has struggled to recapture territory without the help of Iranian ground forces.

Progress toward a political settlement to the Syria conflict has stalled, and Assad shows no willingness to compromise with his opponents. Neither the UN-led "Geneva process" based on UN Security Council Resolution 2254 nor the ad hoc "Astana process" comprising Russia, Iran, and Turkey has yielded progress toward a political settlement to the conflict. While the United States is leading a new effort to break the

stalemate, the fundamental obstacle remains the Assad regime's unwillingness to countenance meaningful reform. Presidential elections in 2021 are unlikely to produce a legitimate electoral outcome, because there is little chance that the regime will permit free and fair elections or the credible participation of the Syrian diaspora.

The United States underestimated Russia's ability to use Syria as an arena for regional influence. Russia's intervention, beginning in 2015, accomplished its proximate aim—the preservation of the regime in defiance of U.S. calls for Assad to "go"—at a relatively low cost. Russia has enhanced its profile and prestige more broadly in the Middle East. The extent of Russia's success in Syria is debatable—it has yet to translate Assad's military gains into the political victory Moscow seemingly seeks—but Russia has nevertheless reestablished itself as a crucial player in the region's politics for the first time in decades.

U.S.-Turkey relations are strained in Syria by starkly diverging views of the SDF. A Turkish incursion into northeastern Syria would represent a major setback to U.S. aims in Syria and a new crisis for the U.S.-Turkish relationship. The United States regards its decision to partner with the SDF to fight ISIS as having been necessitated by the lack of credible and timely Turkish alternative; Turkey regards the SDF as a grave security threat due to its links to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a threat made more dangerous by U.S. training and equipping of the SDF. This dispute has played a significant role in the erosion of U.S.-Turkish relations and may yet prompt a third Turkish incursion into Syria, which would severely complicate the U.S. military campaign against ISIS. There is little sign that Turkey intends to relinquish control of the two Syrian areas it currently controls—Afrin and the "Euphrates Shield" area.

Although the SDF has been a highly effective partner in the fight against ISIS, it must undergo a transition to ensure stability in northeastern Syria. The SDF is regarded by the U.S. military as a highly effective partner in the conventional military campaign against ISIS. That partnership faces new challenges with the shift from fighting to governing. The SDF remains dominated by Syrian Kurds—specifically by the People's Protection Units (YPG)—despite its control over large stretches of predominantly Arab territory. This disparity, and the YPG's heavy-handed approach to governing and resource allocation, has led to unrest in Arab tribal areas. Minimal U.S. civilian engagement and the halt in U.S. stabilization funding in northeastern Syria have diminished American influence.

The Assad regime's systematic targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure constitutes war crimes and demands accountability, as well as enhanced efforts to protect civilians. The Assad regime and its patrons, including Russia, have systematically targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure. A UN commission found the regime guilty of crimes against humanity. Syrians have been subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, and execution at the hands of the regime. Although prospects for accountability are dim in the near term, efforts to document the regime's atrocities are under way.

Syria's humanitarian crisis, not least the challenges posed by internally displaced people and refugees, will reverberate for decades. Most refugees are unlikely to return voluntarily given current conditions in Syria. The Syrian conflict has provoked the most serious human displacement since World War II, 6 million Syrians are internally displaced, and nearly 6 million more are registered as refugees outside the country. Refugees have placed a heavy economic

burden on host countries, especially Syria's neighbors; pressure is increasing, particularly within Lebanon and Turkey, for non-voluntary returns. Inside Syria, a large proportion of the population relies on humanitarian aid, over which the regime seeks to exercise control in order to enhance its power.

Despite these challenges, the United States maintains leverage to shape an outcome in Syria that protects core U.S. national security interests. The Group identified several key points of leverage held by the United States, particularly if used in coordination with allies and partners: influence over northeastern Syria; sanctions against the Assad regime and its backers; the withholding of reconstruction assistance desired by Assad and Russia; and the ongoing diplomatic isolation of the Assad regime.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

Despite its daunting assessment of the situation in Syria, the Group believes that the United States is still able to exercise influence over the conflict's trajectory, and that it must do so given the threats the conflict poses to American interests. The Group believes that the best end state in Syria is one in which a Syrian government is viewed as legitimate by its own population and has the will and capability to end Syria's dependence on foreign forces and to prevent terrorist groups from thriving on Syrian territory. This in turn requires conditions in which Syrian citizens live free from fear of the Assad regime and of Russian, Iranian, and ISIS brutality and within an updated political and social compact based on decentralized governance and equitable resource allocation.

Recognizing that such an outcome is a distant prospect, the Group recommends a strategy that makes a negotiated political settlement in Syria more likely yet also allows the United States to defend its interests even if a political solution is not found. None of those consulted by the Group believe that withdrawing U.S. forces would make ISIS less likely to regroup, Iran less likely to entrench itself, or a negotiated settlement more likely. Although the U.S. military mission in Syria is often lumped together with the Iraq and Afghanistan missions in the "forever war" category, the Syria case offers a different—and far less costly—model. A small U.S. military footprint, supported by U.S. air power and other high-end capabilities, reinforced by a global coalition of like-minded allies and partners, rallied a local partner force many times its size to liberate territory from a terrorist group. What U.S. forces and their partners have gained in Syria should not be discarded with a premature withdrawal.

To that end, the Group recommends that the United States, working in concert with allies and partners, continue its military mission in order to maintain pressure on ISIS and other terrorist groups while maintaining and strengthening pressure on the Assad regime and its backers until conditions are conducive for a political settlement that ends the Syria war. In particular, the Group recommends that the United States:

Halt the U.S. military withdrawal; consolidate gains following the territorial defeat of ISIS; and support communities liberated from ISIS in forming an alternative model for governance, resource allocation, and security in Syria. The Group recommends that the United States (1) update its military mission to head off an ISIS insurgency; (2) adequately prepare for various contingencies and escalation scenarios; (3) return a U.S. civilian presence and stabilization funding to northeastern Syria; (4) press the SDF to govern more inclusively; (5) elevate the ISIS de-

tainee problem set; and (6) prioritize diplomatic and military engagement in Iraq.

Until conditions inside Syria improve, deny the Assad regime and its backers all avenues for normalization by enforcing the regime's diplomatic isolation and a rigorous sanctions architecture. Among other steps, the United States should continue to press allies and partners to refrain from reestablishing diplomatic ties with the Assad regime, to withhold reconstruction assistance, and to strictly enforce sanctions and seek to expand them. In addition, the international community should begin preparing the ground now for the eventual accountability of those responsible for war crimes in Syria, without imposing accountability as a precondition for a political settlement.

Test and verify Russian willingness to support political settlements acceptable to the United States but continue activities that increase the costs to Russia for its actions in Syria. Many observers believe that agreement between the United States and Russia is a prerequisite for progress toward a political settlement, yet Russia has consistently failed to deliver on its commitments in Syria. The United States should require concrete actions of Russia pursuant to any discussions of a political settlement and, absent such actions, should avoid making concessions to Moscow or legitimizing its positions. Concurrently, the United States should pressure Moscow, in part by highlighting Russian complicity in war crimes.

Remain focused on expelling Iranian forces and proxies from Syria but recognize that this is best accomplished in phases. The key near-term goal should be to prevent further entrenchment of Iran and its many partners and proxies while raising the cost to Iran for its actions in Syria. To this end, the United States should continue its support of Israeli air strikes; enforce sanctions aimed at undermining Iran's ability to fund its proxies and partners in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq; maintain the U.S. military presence at the al-Tanf military base; and support efforts to expose Iranian influence efforts in Syria. The United States should insist that any political settlement require the withdrawal of Iranian forces and proxies from Syria.

Seek areas for cooperation with Turkey and address legitimate Turkish security concerns while pressing Turkey to avoid any incursion into northeastern Syria and to improve conditions in the Afrin and Euphrates Shield areas. U.S. efforts to reach agreement on a security zone or security mechanism along Turkey's border with northeastern Syria should continue, and every attempt should be made to isolate Syria from other problems in the U.S.-Turkey relationship. The United States should encourage the resumption of Turkey-PKK peace talks, which hold the best possibility of leading to a détente between Turkey and the SDF. The United States should press Turkey to improve conditions and access in the areas of Syria it controls.

Seek to avert a humanitarian catastrophe in Idlib while addressing the presence there of terrorist groups. The United States should explore avenues to increase the pressure on terrorist groups in Idlib that may be plotting external attacks. At the same time, the United States should seek to deter the Assad regime and its partners from continuing to target civilians in the territory. In preparation for a renewed humanitarian and refugee crisis in Idlib, the United States should press Turkey to facilitate the work of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) serving the population.

Energize efforts to address the humanitarian crisis inside Syria while taking steps to shore up countries hosting Syrian refugees. The United States should work to en-

sure the continued provision of humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations inside and outside Syria. The United States should press for the renewal of the UN "cross-border resolution," rally other states to fund humanitarian appeals for Syria, and work with international financial institutions to support refugee-hosting countries. The United States should stand firmly against efforts to forcibly repatriate Syrian refugees and should resume accepting Syrian refugees in the United States.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. The report read that the United States should make the most of its gains and hold this critical piece of land until a negotiated settlement was reached between all parties. Moreover, the report, which was bipartisan—that had Representatives appointed by Members of Congress and by the administration—read that withdrawing U.S. troops would not make ISIS less likely to regroup or Iran less likely to entrench itself.

President Trump's ill-informed and hasty decision will not only breathe new life into the terrorist groups—into ISIS, which is really just al-Qaida by another name—and cede America's hard-fought gains in the region to Russia, Iran, and Assad, but it will erode U.S. credibility in the long term. It will cede America's hard-fought gains in the region.

I wish there were alternatives that we as a country could pursue. Sadly, I don't think we can put the genie back in the bottle. Here in Congress, though, I hope we will look at ways to hold Turkey and President Erdogan accountable for his actions.

I certainly hope President Trump will revoke his invitation to President Erdogan to visit the United States. President Erdogan needs to hear an unequivocal message of opposition to this incursion from the United States, and it makes no sense to extend hospitality and niceties during this moment of crisis.

Republicans and Democrats must come together and ensure that the administration understands the consequences of these actions. We have to do more to ensure that such mistakes never happen again.

I yield the floor.

S.J. RES. 53

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the resolution of disapproval sponsored by Senator CARDIN that would block the Administration's harmful Affordable Clean Energy Rule.

In Maine, our economy is inextricably linked to the environment. Our State, which is situated at the end of the Nation's air pollution tailpipe, has made substantial progress in reducing harmful emissions by increasing energy efficiency, adopting clean energy technologies, and improving air quality and public health. While I am pleased by the progress our country has already made in reducing air pollutants, the administration's rule to repeal and rewrite the Clean Power Plan is a step in the wrong direction.

Climate change is a significant risk that threatens Maine's working forests, fishing, and agricultural industries, as well as tourism and recreation and our coastal communities. I will continue to work in Congress to support realistic, responsible solutions that help reduce harmful emissions and protect our environment and the health of our citizens.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the vote.

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the Congressional Review Act resolution that has been put forward by the Democrats on which we will soon be voting.

The Democrats' resolution would eliminate President Trump's affordable clean energy rule. The President's rule is commonsense policy. It protects our air, and it allows our economy to grow at the same time. The affordable clean energy rule would replace the Obama administration's so-called Clean Power Plan. The punishing plan would have damaged our economy, and what I have here is a map to go over some of that. It would have closed powerplants. It would have put energy workers on unemployment. It would have reduced the reliability of our electricity. It would have increased energy bills for American families and for small businesses.

The results would have been dramatic. There would have been dramatic increases in electricity bills all across the country. The plan would have devastated communities, certainly in my home State of Wyoming. It would have raised electricity bills by 42 percent in the State of Wyoming, and they would have gone up in every State.

Wyoming is America's leading producer of coal. It supports thousands of good-paying jobs all across the State. Across Wyoming, the punishing power plan would put hard-working men and women out of work. The rule would be a massive roadblock for States. Instead of working collaboratively with State governments, it would put the EPA in the driver's seat of setting a national energy policy.

States would be told what energy sources were allowed within their borders and how to regulate them.

Worst of all, the so-called Clean Power Plan would have barely reduced carbon emissions, it would have crippled our economy, and done very little, if anything, to help the environment.

President Obama's plan wasn't just bad policy, it was illegal. Twenty-seven States, including Wyoming, filed a lawsuit to stop the regulation. The Supreme Court ruled that Obama's EPA went way beyond its legal authority. The Court blocked the overreaching rule.

Now President Trump has put forward a commonsense replacement to protect America's air. The affordable

clean energy rule follows the law, and it is good news for the people of Wyoming and the rest of the country. It recognizes that the EPA is not supposed to pick winners and losers.

Under the new rule, powerplants can make reasonable changes like improving efficiency. The rule promotes the use of new cleaner technologies to generate electricity so energy companies can modernize their powerplants without having to shut them down completely.

The rule also respects the role of States under the Clean Air Act. It gets rid of "Washington knows best," which is an approach we deal with—a top-down approach of unelected, unaccountable, heavyhanded bureaucrats. States understand how to protect the air their citizens breathe. They know it is an important thing to do. The end result will be cleaner air and more affordable energy for America's households.

Now Senate Democrats want to play politics once again and uproot the affordable clean energy rule. Democrats want to resurrect a rule that the Supreme Court took unprecedented action to stop. That would be bad for our environment, bad for our economy, and bad for our country.

Under the Congressional Review Act, if Congress repeals the affordable clean energy rule, the administration couldn't replace it with a similar rule.

The administration put forward a commonsense rule to protect our air quality, and now Democrats want to kill it. That is the proposal on the floor today.

Democrats have become hostages to the far-left agenda, even when it doesn't make any sense. It is not good policy, and we have seen this before.

The Environment and Public Works Committee, which I chair, recently passed legislation to help reduce the amount of plastic pollution in our oceans. The bipartisan bill follows up on the previous bipartisan Save Our Seas Act that passed and was signed into law last Congress.

Instead of supporting the legislation, extreme environmentalists oppose the bill—a bipartisan bill we got passed last Congress. We are going on to the next level now. Now the extreme environmentalists, of course, oppose the bill because we are not banning all plastics. Can you imagine something so ridiculous? But that is what they want.

Working together in a bipartisan way—even when we are doing things that to me make sense, to others make sense, to bipartisan Senators make sense, to the House make sense, the extreme environmentalists say it is still not enough for them and their extreme measures and approaches.

These extreme activists want to do the same thing with our air. Instead of finding common ground, their goal seems to be to shut down our economy because that is what they are promoting.

Democrats in the House of Representatives, regrettably, have fol-

lowed a similar pattern. House Democrats refuse to work with Republicans to pass commonsense bills to protect our air and address climate change, which we are promoting—an effort to actually address it. Apparently, it is not going far enough for the extreme Democratic environmentalists.

Bipartisan legislation to support carbon capture technologies, which we passed in this body, sits in the House of Representatives waiting for a vote.

The USE IT Act—which I introduced along with Senator WHITEHOUSE, who gives speeches each week on climate change on the floor of the Senate. We have worked together. It has passed our committee unanimously. It has passed the Senate unanimously. Yet, with overwhelming bipartisan support in the Senate, it is still being blocked in the House. The bill has bipartisan support in the House as well, but it hasn't gone anywhere. It is being stopped because Democratic leaders in the House refuse to move a commonsense bill that would lower carbon emissions and help address carbon climate change.

They are climate alarmists. They want things done drastically, unilaterally, immediately, when we are trying to take commonsense steps in the right direction.

Killing commonsense policies, like the affordable clean energy rule and the USE IT Act, makes no sense to me.

President Trump's rule respects the law, and it helps the environment. It is a win-win for our country. Americans deserve clean air. They also deserve clear rules, and the affordable clean energy rule gives us both.

I urge every Senator to oppose the resolution that is coming up to the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). All time is expired.

The clerk will read the title of the joint resolution for the third time.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "nay" and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) would have voted "nay."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER),

the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 41, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 324 Leg.]

YEAS—41

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Rosen
Bennet	Hassan	Schatz
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Smith
Cardin	King	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Collins	Menendez	Van Hollen
Coons	Merkley	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Whitehouse
Durbin	Peters	Wyden
Feinstein	Reed	

NAYS—53

Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blackburn	Grassley	Risch
Blunt	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rounds
Burr	Inhofe	Rubio
Capito	Johnson	Sasse
Cassidy	Jones	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sinema
Crapo	Manchin	Sullivan
Cruz	McConnell	Thune
Daines	McSally	Tillis
Enzi	Moran	Toomey
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Fischer	Paul	Young
Gardner	Perdue	

NOT VOTING—6

Alexander	Harris	Klobuchar
Booker	Isakson	Sanders

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 53) was rejected.

RELATING TO A NATIONAL EMERGENCY DECLARED BY THE PRESIDENT ON FEBRUARY 15, 2019—VETO

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Veto message to accompany S.J. Res. 54, a joint resolution relating to a national emergency declared by the President on February 15, 2019.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate Democratic leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.J. RES. 77

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I am going to speak for a minute before I make my unanimous consent request.

Now, we have a crisis here in this world and here in America. Because of the President's precipitous action to take a small number of American troops out of northern Syria and green-light Erdogan's invasion, we are in real trouble. We are in trouble in a whole lot of ways.

Most importantly, we, in New York, know that a small group of bad people can cause terrible terrorism with huge loss of life, even when they are 7,000 miles away. There are about 70,000 ISIS

prisoners and their families now being guarded by the Kurds, but because of the President's action, they will no longer be guarded.

When we went to the White House yesterday and asked the President and his military folks what is the plan to prevent many of these ISIS would-be terrorists from escaping, they didn't have one. They didn't have one because the Kurds have left, and the only people who might guard them are the Syrians or the Turks, and neither of them have a great interest in stopping ISIS.

In fact, I asked the Defense Secretary Esper: Is there any intelligence that shows that either the Syrians or the Turks would do a good job at guarding the ISIS prisoners and preventing them from escaping?

No, there was no intelligence to that effect. As a result, ISIS prisoners are escaping, will continue to escape, and America will pay an awful price—an awful price. The Kurds will pay an awful price. They have fought alongside our soldiers. They are our allies.

I talked to my friend from Kentucky who said the Kurds are better off with the Syrians. Well, the Kurds sure don't think so. They would rather be back to the status quo. Talk to their leaders. Certainly, America will not be better off at all with ISIS prisoners escaping.

Who did this? The President. The President's incompetence has put American lives in danger—simply, starkly put but accurate. In New York, as I said, we know well how a small group of fanatics halfway around the world can do incredible damage and kill thousands of Americans here on our soil.

It should shake every Member of this body, regardless of their ideology and regardless of their views on Turkey, that the President made this decision so abruptly without heeding the advice of our commanders on the ground and now has no plan to manage the consequences.

After meeting with the President yesterday, it was clear to both Democrats and Republicans in the room that he does not grasp the gravity of the situation. He doesn't understand it. The most important thing we can do right now is send President Trump a message that Congress, the vast majority of Democrats and Republicans, demand he reverse course.

I am asking this as a unanimous consent to not go through a long regular process because the bottom line is, the longer we wait, the more Kurds will die—our allies—the more ISIS prisoners will escape, and the greater danger, hour by hour, day by day, America falls into. We should move this resolution. We need unanimous consent.

I spoke to my good friend from Kentucky. He said he wanted to put a resolution on the floor about military aid to Turkey, something many on my side would be sympathetic to. I offered him the ability of moving his resolution—we would have to, of course, get permission of all Members, but I would

work through that—in return for us moving our resolution. He still said no. He still said no. I think that is a horrible decision. I think it could well risk the lives of Americans down the road. I think it will certainly risk the lives of many more Kurds, who are our allies.

We will return to this issue. I wish we could pass it now—the same bill that passed the House with the vast majority of Republicans, 2 to 1, with Leaders MCCARTHY and SCALISE and CHENEY voting for it—and go forward. I understand the motivations of my friend from Kentucky are sincere and real. He has had these positions consistently. They are not the positions of the majority on his side nor on our side on many issues. On some, we have worked together and agreed, but I think it is so wrong not to move forward. It is so wrong to let the man, both Democrats and Republicans saw in the White House yesterday, stay in control without pressuring him to do better—without pressuring him to do better.

There is no better, quicker, or more powerful way to pressure the President to undo the damage he has caused than to pass a bipartisan joint resolution that will go directly to his desk. We will come back to this issue. It will not go away. It cannot go away for the safety of America, for the safety of the Kurds, for some degree of stability, not chaos in the Middle East that the President, President Trump, precipitously caused.

I plead with my colleague from Kentucky and anyone else who might object to let us have the vote. Let us make our arguments and prevail. We are willing to do debate time. Let us not say it has to be my way or the highway when so many lives and such danger is at risk.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 246, H.J. Res. 77; that the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate vote on passage with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, reserving the right to object. The Constitution is quite clear on this subject. If the minority leader wishes to engage in the civil war in Syria that has been going on for nearly a decade, we should obey the Constitution. He should come to the floor and say we are ready to declare a war, we are ready to authorize force, and we are going to stick our troops in the middle of this messy, messy five-sided civil war, where we would be ostensibly opposed to the Turkish Government that has made an incursion. We would then be opposed to our NATO ally. It would be the first time in history that we would be inserting ourselves militarily against a NATO ally.

None of this is to excuse Turkey's action. In fact, today I will offer a resolution that would actually do something.