

certain kinds of leadership only America can contribute.

Fortunately, we are not in this alone. The huge progress we have won in recent years against ISIS and the Taliban has come by partnering with local forces, with support from a broad international coalition. America has only provided limited specialized capabilities to reinforce the local partners that do the heaviest lifting. This approach is sustainable.

Unfortunately, we know exactly what happens when America forgets these lessons and simply decides we are tired of sustaining the fight. Abandoning Afghanistan in the 1990s helped create the conditions for al-Qaida's ability to grow and plan the September 11 attacks from a safe haven far from our shores. President Obama's retreat from Iraq allowed ISIS to rise from the still-warm ashes of al-Qaida in Iraq.

If not arrested, withdrawing from Syria will invite more of the chaos that breeds terrorism and creates a vacuum our adversaries will certainly fill.

It will invite the brutal Assad regime to reassert its oppressive control over northeastern Syria, repressing Sunni Arab communities and creating the same conditions that led to ISIS's growth in the first place.

Russia will gain more leverage to amass power and influence throughout the Middle East, project power into the Mediterranean, and even promote its interests in Africa.

Iran-backed forces could have access to a strategic corridor that runs all the way from Tehran to the very doorstep of Israel.

So where do we go from here? Many of us in the Senate were ahead of the game on the need to reaffirm American global leadership in the ongoing fight against radical terror. At the beginning of this year, a bipartisan supermajority of Senators warned about exactly this course of events. The McConnell amendment to S. 1 earned 70 votes back in February. We specifically warned against a precipitous withdrawal from either Afghanistan or Syria and noted the need for an American presence. Congress should affirm—actually, reaffirm—the same truths today, and we should do so strongly.

Unfortunately, the resolution crafted by House Democrats is simply not sufficient. It is not so much wrong as it is badly insufficient. It focuses solely on the Kurds, ignoring the critical Sunni-Arab community that suffered under both Assad's regime and ISIS and vulnerable minority communities like the Christian Arabs of Syria. The House was silent on the key matter of maintaining an actual physical U.S. military presence in Syria.

Perhaps the goal was to paper over disagreements within the Democratic Party. After all, our colleague, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, recently told a national television audience—this is the senior Senator from Massachusetts—"I think that we ought

to get out of the Middle East." "I think we ought to get out of the Middle East," said the senior Senator from Massachusetts, and almost all of our Democratic colleagues currently running for President refused to sign on to the McConnell amendment that earned 70 votes earlier this year.

We can't afford to dance around the critical question of a U.S. presence in Syria and the Middle East for the sake of Democratic Presidential primary politics. The Senate needs to speak up. We cannot effectively support our partners on the ground without a military presence. Senators who thought we should withdraw from Syria and Afghanistan in February do not get to criticize President Trump for withdrawing from Syria today unless they go on the record, admit they changed their minds, and say it is too dangerous to quit.

So, today, along with Chairman INHOFE, Chairman RISCH, Chairman BURR, and Senator GRAHAM, I am introducing a stronger resolution that acknowledges hard truths and focuses on our strategic interests in the Middle East.

Our resolution acknowledges the vital role our Kurdish and Arab Syrian partners have played in rooting out and destroying the ISIS caliphate. It condemns Turkey's decision to escalate hostilities in Syria, warns against the abandonment of our allies and partners in Syria, and urges President Trump to rethink his invitation for President Erdogan to visit the White House.

It also acknowledges Turkey's legitimate national security concerns emanating from the conflict in Syria and the significant risks to the United States if such a strategically consequential ally were to fall further into Moscow's orbit. It recognizes the grave consequences of U.S. withdrawal: the rising influence of Russia, Iran, and the Assad regime and the escape of more than 100 ISIS-affiliated fighters detained in the region.

We specifically urge the President to end—end the drawdown, something that, fortunately, appears to be underway. We urge a reengagement with our partners in this region. We highlight the need for international diplomatic efforts to end the underlying civil wars in Syria and Afghanistan on terms that address the conditions that have allowed al-Qaida and ISIS to thrive. We cannot repeat this mistake in Afghanistan.

I am aware there is some appetite on both sides of the aisle to quickly reach for the toolbox of sanctions. I myself played a critical role in creating sanction regimes in the past, but I caution us against developing a reflex to use sanctions as our tool of first, last, and only resort in implementing our foreign policy. Sanctions may play an important role in this process, and I am open to the Senate considering them, but we need to think extremely carefully before we employ the same tools

against a democratic NATO ally that we would against the worst rogue state.

Do we know what political impacts such sanctions will have inside Turkey? Will they weaken President Erdogan or rally the country to his cause? Do we know the impact sanctions will have on U.S. companies or on the economies of our closest allies that have deeply integrated their economies with Turkey?

If we are going to use sanctions against a democratic ally, we are going to have to be careful. We are going to have to be smart. We are going to have to be thoughtful and deliberate. We don't want to further drive a NATO ally into the arms of the Russians.

Serious conversations about the use of sanctions must involve our colleagues on the Foreign Relations, Banking, and Finance Committees to ensure that this tool is used correctly.

The most important thing the Senate can do right now is speak clearly and reaffirm the core principles that unite most of us, Republicans and Democrats, about the proper role for American leadership in Syria, in the Middle East, and, for that matter, in the world.

We hope the damage in Syria can be undone, but perhaps, even more importantly, we absolutely must take steps so the same mistakes—the same mistakes are not repeated in Iraq or Afghanistan.

I feel confident that my resolution is a strong and sorely needed step. I feel confident my colleagues will agree, and I urge them to join me.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### PROTOCOL TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY OF 1949 ON THE ACCESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Calendar No. 5, Treaty document No. 116-1, Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949 on the Accession of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Pending:

McConnell amendment No. 946, to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 947 (to amend amendment No. 946), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

#### APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the Republican leader in recent days has charged that because the House of Representatives is now engaged in its constitutional duty to examine Presidential wrongdoing, that somehow Democrats are not interested in legislating.

It is a curious criticism coming from Leader MCCONNELL, Democrats not interested in legislating, from the man who proudly calls himself the “grim reaper.” Since the midterms, the Democratic House majority has passed hundreds of bills with bipartisan support while Leader MCCONNELL has deliberately focused the Senate on anything but legislation. He has turned this Chamber into a legislative graveyard.

Democrats want to vote on things. Gun safety, how about it? Healthcare, how about it? Infrastructure, how about it? Improving our democracy. On none of these things will Leader MCCONNELL even dare put a bill on the floor, let alone the House bills, which would have a chance of getting something done.

This very week, we have an example of how Democrats plan to work with our Republican colleagues to advance legislation. The Republican leader has indicated, finally, alas, that he may bring several appropriations bills to the floor this week. Democrats want to move forward and debate those bills in an open and vigorous fashion.

There are several appropriations bills that don’t have any bipartisan support. The Republican leader knows why. We need to have bipartisan support on the 302(b)s, the allocations to the various agencies, to move forward on bills like Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, Military Construction, and Defense. That negotiation, to succeed, must be bipartisan. That is what the history of this Chamber shows. That is what commonsense and logic shows. House leaders have suggested a conference—Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate—on these 302(b)s. That is a good idea. If Republicans are willing to engage with us on 302(b)s, we get negotiations back on track to fund the government.

In the meantime, Democrats want to move forward on the noncontroversial appropriation bills—the bills that have had bipartisan agreement—and we hope Leader MCCONNELL will allow a fair and robust amendment process. It would be nice to consider something on the floor besides an endless parade of rightwing judges—who side with a special powerful interest, time and time again, not working Americans—and Executive appointments.

#### TURKEY AND SYRIA

Madam President, on Syria, today the 5-day pause on hostilities in northern Syria is set to come to an end. What happens next is completely unknown. Will Erdogan continue his military incursion into Syria? Will the Kurds—facing another Turkish offensive—leave their posts guarding ISIS prisoners to once again defend themselves, allowing ISIS prisoners, dangerous to America, to escape? Will Presidents Erdogan and Putin cut a new deal that is bad for America and our allies? Nobody knows the answer to any of these.

What we do know is that the situation has rapidly deteriorated compared to just a few weeks ago.

What caused this deterioration? One thing: the President’s abrupt decision to withdraw U.S. troops from the region after a phone call with President Erdogan. When ISIS had been degraded and more than 10,000 detainees—many of them hardened ISIS fighters—were under lock and key, to undo that is putting America’s security at risk. That is what President Trump has done. This so-called tough warrior backed off in a call with a much lesser power, President Erdogan. He has done this before. We don’t know how many of these 10,000 detainees and their families have escaped. We don’t know where they have gone, nor is there any plan to get them back into detention facilities. These are dangerous people—dangerous to our homeland, dangerous to New York and Chicago and Miami and Dallas and Denver and Los Angeles—and we don’t know where they are or what they are doing all because of President Trump’s precipitous action. I get excited about this—angrily excited, negatively excited—because my city has suffered from terrorists 7,000 miles away, a small group, who did such damage.

As the New York Times reported after ISIS had been on the run, “Now, analysts say that Mr. Trump’s pullout [of U.S. troops from northern Syria] has handed the Islamic State its biggest win in four years.”

President Trump has handed ISIS its biggest victory in 4 years. How can any American support that? How can so many of our Republican colleagues and Republican supporters of President Trump shrug their shoulders?

Let me repeat: President Trump’s “pullout has handed the Islamic State its biggest win in more than four years and greatly improved its prospects.”

The President’s incompetence with Erdogan and Syria has handed ISIS a

“get out of jail free” card and has simply put American lives in danger. For the sake of our national security, President Trump and his administration need to get a handle on this situation.

I believe Senators from both parties have been trying to get the administration’s top officials, including Secretary of State Pompeo, Secretary of Defense Esper, and General Milley, to give the Senate a briefing on its Syria policy and a plan to contain and further degrade ISIS. They canceled the scheduled briefing last week, pulled the plug on a briefing that was supposed to be this afternoon, and have so far refused to commit to a new date. We need that briefing to happen.

Secretary Pompeo, Secretary Esper, General Milley, and CIA Director Haspel have the responsibility to report to Congress on what is happening in this dangerous situation, and, once again, this administration is withholding vital information. It is a disgrace. It is probably because they don’t have a plan, so they don’t know what to do. But bringing them here may help formulate that plan or push them to get a plan.

In the meantime, Democrats are set to meet with Brett McGurk, the Presidential envoy in charge of countering ISIS, at a special meeting Wednesday so that we can try to come up with some answers, even though it should be the administration doing that.

The American people should be very concerned that the Trump administration does not seem to have any plan to secure the enduring defeat of ISIS in Syria. Senate Democrats will try to learn as much as possible from the experts available to us—folks like Mr. McGurk—but, ultimately, the President alone has the authority to correct our Nation’s course.

So it is still very important for the Senate to pass the House resolution condemning the President’s decision to precipitously withdraw from northern Syria. The President tends to listen when the Republicans here in Congress express their disapproval. That is what happened in the House, where over 120 Republicans voted with Democrats on a bipartisan resolution, including Leaders McCARTHY, SCALISE, and CHENEY, hard-war Republicans, but at least they knew how bad this was for America. I wish our Senate Republican colleagues would have shown the same bit of courage that McCARTHY, SCALISE, and CHENEY showed.

If the House resolution is tough enough for House Republican leadership, surely it is good enough for the majority of Senate Republicans. So we will keep trying to pass the House resolution here in the Senate because it means we could send a bill to the President’s desk that shows him a bipartisan majority of Congress is against his reckless decision to consider it in Syria. This is extremely, extremely troubling, and I am very angry—very angry.

## CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

Madam President, later this week, Senate Democrats are going to use their authority under the Congressional Review Act to force a vote to repeal the IRS's harmful rule that effectively eliminates State charitable tax credits all across the country.

I know my Republican colleagues want to frame this CRA vote as a vote on the State and local tax credit cap they put in place in tax reform. I disagree. I vehemently disagree with that policy and will look to change it as soon as possible.

It has hurt so many people who are middle class and not wealthy in New York and also in suburbs throughout the country. By the way, it is probably one of the major reasons the House flipped from Republican to Democrats. So many of those districts in New Jersey, California, New York, and Pennsylvania were affected by the SALT cap, and people throughout rebelled against their Republican Congress, and they put new people in.

But it affects other things as well. The regulation we will be voting on impacts State charitable credits virtually across every State, ranging in areas from education to conservation, to child care, and more.

Do not take my word for it. In Kentucky, the Community Foundation of Louisville, a major philanthropic organization, has warned that IRS's rule will effectively extinguish the endowed Kentucky program, which has generated more than \$31 million in charitable donations.

Look at South Carolina, where my friend Senator GRAHAM has made clear that this rule will have devastating consequences for the South Carolina Research Authority, which helps start-up companies in his State create new jobs.

Let's go to Colorado, where the Boys and Girls Club of Chaffee County warned that "these proposed regulations will severely limit the effectiveness of our Colorado Child Care Contribution Tax Credit," which they say will "limit our ability to address an issue which is fundamental to the economic health of the community." The list goes on and on.

I ask my Republican colleagues, before we vote on the CRA tomorrow, to look at how it affects their State, not just in terms of State and local taxes but charitable contributions, education, homeschool, and many other areas.

The vote is about getting rid of an IRS rule that hinders State programs, like the ones I have mentioned. My Republican colleagues have always proclaimed that they are defenders of States' rights and the 10th Amendment. Here is an opportunity for them to walk the walk and to stop the IRS from making life harder on both taxpayers and local economies. I urge them to vote with us to repeal this rule.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

## PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, over in the House today, the Ways and Means Committee is marking up Speaker PELOSI's drug bill, the latest installment in Democrats' campaign for government-run healthcare.

Like Democrats' other plan for government takeover of healthcare, the so-called Medicare for All vote, the Pelosi drug bill will ultimately leave Americans worse off when it comes to access to care.

There is no question that the American healthcare system isn't perfect. High drug costs are a problem, and one in four seniors reports difficulty affording medications. Stories of patients being forced to ration pills or abandon their prescriptions at the pharmacy counter are unacceptable, but upending the entire American healthcare system is not the answer.

A strong majority of Americans are happy with their health insurance coverage and the quality of the healthcare they receive. Americans have access to treatments that individuals in other countries simply don't have access to. Take cancer drugs, for example. Between 2011 and 2018, 82 new cancer drugs became available. U.S. patients have access to 96 percent of those new drugs. In Germany, by contrast, patients have access to just 73 percent of those new cancer drugs. In France, it is just 66 percent, and in Japan, patients have access to only 54 percent of these new cancer drugs. In other words, Japanese patients are missing out on access to roughly half of the new cancer drugs that emerged between 2011 and 2018.

So why do Americans have such tremendous access to new drugs while other countries trail behind? Because the U.S. Government doesn't dictate drug prices or drug coverage. That is also the reason American companies lead the world in medical innovation.

Back in 1986, investment in drug research by European drug companies exceeded U.S. investment by approximately 24 percent, but all of that changed—all of that changed—when European governments stepped in and started imposing price controls.

Today, European investment in drug research and development is almost 40 percent lower than U.S. investment. It was 24 percent higher in 1968, and, today, it is 40 percent lower.

Speaker PELOSI's bill would start the process of destroying the system that has produced so much access and innovation for American patients. Her legislation would impose government price controls on as many as 250 medications.

If progressives in her caucus have their way, the bill would impose government price controls on all medications. Either way, the result is likely to look much the same as we have seen before—reduced access to lifesaving treatments and substantially reduced

investment for the prescription drug breakthroughs of the future.

Under the Pelosi bill, Americans could look forward to a future where we might be the ones losing out on a quarter or more of the new cancer drugs that are coming to market.

There is no question that we need to find solutions to drive down drug costs, but the answer to the problem of high drug costs is not to destroy the system that has given American patients access to so many new cures and treatments.

Republicans want to develop bipartisan legislation focused on lowering prescription drug costs without—without—destroying the American system of access and innovation.

The Senate Finance Committee, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, and the Senate Judiciary Committee have spent a lot of time this year working on this issue, and work on truly bipartisan solutions remains ongoing.

Earlier this year, House committees advanced drug pricing legislation on a bipartisan basis, but, unfortunately, House Democrats have made it clear that they are more interested in playing politics than in cooperating on legislation to address the challenges that are facing American families.

Democrats know that the Pelosi drug bill has no chance of passing the Senate, but they have chosen to pursue this socialist fantasy instead of working with Republicans to develop a bipartisan prescription drug bill that isn't just price controls and that might actually go somewhere.

Like the Democrats' larger socialist fantasy, Medicare for All, the Pelosi drug bill will ultimately hurt the very people it is supposed to help, in this case, by restricting their access to life-saving drugs and future prescription drug innovations. The Pelosi drug bill is a bad prescription for the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

## DRUG CAUCUS HEARING

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, this Congress, I have the great honor of cochairing the Senate Caucus on International Narcotics with my friend and colleague from California, Senator FEINSTEIN.

As our country continues to battle the scourge of the opioid epidemic, fight drug trafficking at our borders, and attack illicit drug sources abroad, the work of this caucus could not be more timely or more important. We must do more, I believe, to treat addiction, and we need to do more to stop Americans from using illegal drugs in the first instance.