

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, first of all, I don't question the sincerity whatsoever of my good friend from New Hampshire. Indeed, she is quite correct that the United States has been a leader as far as developing methods by which we clean up the air and clean up the water.

There is nothing that is happening here today, at this moment, that is going to affect that at all. American companies are going to continue to be on the front edge of this, on a very innovative basis, and I have every confidence that American businesses will rise to the occasion and will continue to actually be the world leader in this regard.

What I object to is making an agreement with other countries that truly binds U.S. citizens by doing it without going through the constitutional process of submitting the agreement that is between our country and others, as is specifically—very specifically provided in article II, section 2.

I think if we did that, I think we would wind up with a better agreement. I think we would wind up with a bipartisan agreement. We all know that when we have a bipartisan agreement, we do substantially better as far as rising to the occasion and all getting behind the effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, yesterday a bipartisan group met with seven Fortune 500 companies. They were all on the cutting edge of new energy technologies, and everyone around the table said what they need is to see policies at the Federal level that encouraged the development of new energy technologies and what we can do to address climate change.

I like what my colleague said about being able to work together to address this. I hope we can do that, and I am ready to sit down anytime he is to look at things we might be able to agree on that will help us move forward to address climate change. I appreciate his willingness to work in a bipartisan way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

VETERANS DAY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise this evening to pay tribute to all the men and women who have worn our Nation's uniform in defense of our freedom. Veterans Day is a deeply meaningful day for our Nation. Our country sets this day aside to honor her servicemembers.

In Nebraska, we remember the sacrifices of our own heroes. We admire the courage required to leave your home in Nebraska and serve America in her hour of need. It was over 100 years ago, at the 11th hour, on the 11th day, during the 11th month of the year that the roar of battle in World War I

fell silent. Since then, Nebraskans and all Americans have come together every year to renew our appreciation for our Nation's heroes. We pledge that no matter how much time has passed, we will never forget their valor, their service, and their selflessness.

In June, it was one of the greatest honors of my life to gather at freedom's altar in Normandy, France, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-day. I was overwhelmed with both gratitude and pride for our men and women who ensure that our freedom lives on, and evil is vanquished.

Now, 75 years earlier, minutes from where I was standing, Omaha's own CPL Ed Morrissette arrived at the beaches of Normandy with the 6th Infantry Regiment. As the Omaha World Herald reports, "He leaped over the side of the landing craft into shoulder-deep water, carrying a roll of communications wire."

Morrissette recalled holding the wire and his rifle above the water as he waded through, dodging an onslaught of enemy artillery fire. By the grace of God, he completed his mission, and he survived the Normandy invasion.

Corporal Morrissette continued fighting for our Nation in France and Germany. Following the war, his career as a civilian engineer eventually led him to Offutt Air Force Base. Recently, his courage and his dedication were recognized.

At the age of 96, the Government of France awarded Corporal Morrissette the highest military or civilian medal—the French Legion of Honor. Corporal Morrissette's story inspires all of us to remember that our duty to honor our Nation's heroes is never finished. The responsibility falls to all of us to listen to their stories and to carry them on. Not only do we honor our troops with our words, we salute them with our actions.

Nebraskans have always taken this to heart. It is why you read stories like that of Chuck Ogle from Kearney. He was a pilot in the 498th U.S. Army Medical Corps air ambulance company during the Tet Offensive in Vietnam. Every single day, he carries with him a list of his 14 fellow servicemembers who were killed in action. It is why you see stories of hero flights for Nebraska veterans to visit Washington, DC.

Last October, a plane carried 80 Korean veterans from Hall County to our Nation's Capital to visit the monuments dedicated to their service. This marked the 10th flight for the county's veterans to Washington. Now, every living veteran in Hall County has been given the opportunity to make this trip. It is why over the last few years business leaders and members of the Omaha community rallied around the goal of building a new ambulatory clinic at the Omaha VA hospital.

In response to delays to update the aging Omaha VA facility, I introduced and President Obama signed into law the CHIP IN for Vets Act in 2016. The

bill allows control of VA projects to be placed where it should be—back in the hands of local communities. It allows communities like Omaha to take the lead on new projects by permitting the VA to accept private contributions to ensure VA projects are finished both on time and on budget. Omaha's community and business leaders came up with this idea in the first place, and they have delivered.

Construction began on a new ambulatory center on the Omaha VA campus in May of 2018. After the original cost estimate of \$120 million, the Government Accountability Office released a preliminary report that found that the implementation of the CHIP IN for Vets Act would reduce the total estimated cost to \$86 million. The report projected that the new facility is now \$34 million under budget and it is 4½ months ahead of schedule.

In the same report, a VA official stated that because of the agency's current major construction backlog, the CHIP IN approach allowed work on the Omaha project to begin at least 5 years sooner than it would have under a normal process. Now Nebraska's veterans may get the quality of care they need and deserve earlier than expected. The success of this project is a testament to the deep respect and admiration Nebraskans have for our veterans.

Scripture encourages us to pay our dues wherever they may be. If someone is due respect, show them respect. If honor is due, honor them. The amount of honor and respect our State and Nation owe our veterans is something we can never fully repay. Our country could not live on without their service and sacrifice.

I want to sincerely thank our veterans for their service when our country needed it the most.

Whether it was in the trenches of Europe while liberating a continent from evil or in the Pacific theater during World War II or stopping the threat of communism in Korea or Vietnam or defending our Nation against terrorism in Iraq and Afghanistan, the rescue of human freedom began with you. I can promise you that America will never forget your incredible courage and patriotism, and we will continue to strive to be worthy of the freedom that burns brighter today because of your service. On behalf of all Nebraskans and a grateful country, thank you.

May God bless our Nation's veterans and their families, and may God bless the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. INHOFE. You know, we don't hear that very often. I just heard the term from the Senator from Nebraska "under budget and ahead of schedule."

You did something right. Good for you.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. President, I have been asked several times in the last couple, 3 days where we are with regard to what I consider to be the most significant bill of the year every year, which is the Defense authorization bill, and I have been having to give the same answer for the last 3 or 4 days, and it is unfortunate, but I think it is going to ultimately happen.

Last week, I came down here and I talked about why we needed to pass the National Defense Authorization Act and why a full-year continuing resolution is totally unacceptable and would be devastating to us. I am back here again because in the last week, nothing has changed. That is not OK. The reason it has not changed is because many of the Members of the House are off someplace. I think they are in Afghanistan or someplace on a trip when we are in the middle of negotiating.

Let me just make sure we all understand what I am talking about. For 58 consecutive years, we passed the national defense authorization bill, so we will ultimately pass it. We did that. And I have to say that this is not a partisan statement I am making about this because the House and Senate Democrats and Republicans did a good job.

I particularly want to thank JACK REED. JACK REED and I—I am the chairman of the committee, and he is the ranking member—did our bill in record time. We set a record, actually, a year ago. We did this in a shorter period of time than has been done in 40 years, and we were anticipating doing that again. We did our bill in the Senate, and everything came out fine. We ended up passing it with only two votes in opposition to it. So there is no reason we are not doing it right now.

The reason this is critical is that if for some reason we didn't get this done until December, our kids over there would not be funded. I am talking about payroll and everything else. Our military would stop in its tracks. That is not going to happen. One reason we know it is not going to happen is because we introduced the short version of the bill that upset everyone. That was taking everything out of the bill that had nothing to do with defense and just doing it. That is getting kind of in the weeds, and it is complicated. Nevertheless, we need to get to it just in a matter of days now, as soon as the members of the committee in the House are back in town.

What kind of a message do my Democratic colleagues think they are sending our troops who lay their lives on the line every day if we don't prioritize their pay, their housing, and their programs to care for their families while they are away? What kind of a message do our Democratic colleagues think we are sending our allies and our partners, those who depend on us? What kind of a message are we sending those who are not our allies?

This is the problem we are having. I say to the Democrats in the House—because it is not the Republicans in the House, and it is not the Democrats in the Senate. This is just the Democrats in the House. We passed our bill in a bipartisan way here in the Senate, and we just need to get this finished. It is the most important bill of the year.

Now they claim we are not supporting our partners in Syria, and then they turn around on a dime and refuse to authorize the very funds that keep our partners safe and effective in the fight against ISIS.

I am concerned about the kind of message our colleagues are sending to our adversaries. Our adversaries enjoy this dysfunction. They want defense funding mired in partisan debate. They don't want us to catch up.

If we don't take action now, partisan bickering over supporting our troops and investing in national defense will be our Achilles' heel.

At the end of the day, these challenges won't go away because we want them to go away. They are out there. To meet these challenges, our troops need equipment, training, and weapons.

Everything is outlined in this blueprint. This is the blueprint that is the National Defense Strategy of the Nation. This was put together by an equal number of Democrats and Republicans well over a year ago as to how we want to handle our national defense and what our strategy is going to be. The President adopted this, it is a good strategy, and we have been following this in our committee to the letter.

We have this National Defense Strategy Commission report. There is a quote from GEN Creighton Abrams, a military leader from World War II on through Vietnam. His name may sound familiar because the Abrams tank was named after him. He talked about how after World War II the United States failed to properly modernize and train our military. And who paid for it? Our soldiers, airmen, Marines, and sailors. They paid for it with their lives. He said: "The monuments we raise to their heroism and sacrifice are really surrogates for the monuments we owe ourselves for our blindness to reality . . . for our unsubstantiated wishful thinking about how war could not come."

That is exactly what happened. It was true then, and it is true now. So to say that these things can wait while the House goes on another recess or to use them as a bargaining chip or to forgo them to instead wage war on our own President is at best a waste of time and resources and at worse a dangerous abdication of our constitutional duty.

Unfortunately, the truth is, if we kick the can down the road on these defense policy and funding bills, we are just adding another challenge to our defense.

We were off to a great start last year. Defense appropriations were enacted on time for the first time in a decade, and

as I said, we passed the NDAA over here faster than we had ever done in 40 years.

All of the service leaders who came before the Senate Armed Services Committee said that having on-time appropriations and authorization is critical to rebuilding the force. We have the National Defense Strategy and the commission report as a roadmap. We have a budget deal. There is no reason we can't get this done. There is no good reason our Democratic colleagues are dragging their feet. Our senior military leaders said that a continuing resolution is absolutely the worst thing we can do.

By the way, a lot of people don't know what a continuing resolution is. If you pass a continuing resolution because you can't get appropriations bills passed, then you are continuing what you did the previous year. That doesn't work when you are carrying on a military because the needs we have in the coming year are not the same needs. We could have those programs already complete. Yet we would still have funding for them under a continuing resolution. It is a separate issue, but it is one that is critically important today and is being considered today.

So I am surprised that the Democrats in the House—not the Senate. The Senate Democrats and Republicans worked very well together. I am surprised that the Democrats in the House are willing to resort to a full-year CR. It is throwing in the towel. It is quitting when our troops need us the most.

My Republican colleagues in the House, led by House Armed Services Ranking Member THORNBERRY, put out this document that talks about how America's military will be damaged under a full-year CR. No one has talked about this before. I am glad he came out with it. I will mention five examples that he mentioned.

It would extend the pilot shortage in our Air Force—extend, because we are still climbing out of the current shortage. We have a problem. We have a problem in the Air Force, and we have a problem everywhere we are using flying equipment, whether it is fixed wing or otherwise. This is a problem, and it is a serious problem. If we were to somehow have to do a full-year CR, that problem wouldn't be solved.

It would prevent the military from managing its personnel, including necessary efforts to grow the force, pay for military moves, and lock in bonuses for our troops. That won't happen if we end up with a full-year CR.

It would force the Navy to cancel ship maintenance and training. Repairs for 14 ships would be canceled.

It would worsen the existing munitions shortage by preventing DOD from buying more than 6,000 weapons.

Finally, we would fall even further behind our competitors on hypersonic weapons, artificial intelligence, and next-generation equipment that we need to face all the challenges I just talked about.