

long provided benefits to veterans who suffer from these conditions. It has provided healthcare and compensation so as to help to defer the hardships veterans have faced from the wounds from which they still suffer after having been on the battlefield.

In response to more recent studies, in 2017, VA Secretary Shulkin decided to add bladder cancer, hypertension, Parkinson's-like symptoms, and hypothyroidism to the list of Agent Orange-related conditions that are eligible for benefits, which would have improved the lives of 83,000 vets. Shockingly, once again, within this cruel administration—it doesn't even care about our veterans—it was reported that OMB Director and White House Chief of Staff Mulvaney has decided to block benefits for these new conditions because he is worried about the cost. It is disgraceful.

Let me repeat.

Despite the recommendation of President Trump's VA Secretary and the recommendation of the National Academy of Medicine, Mulvaney has decided to block health benefits to sick veterans. Many of these veterans are retired, and many don't have a steady income. These benefits could make the difference between life and death, but Mick Mulvaney—the same Mick Mulvaney who thought \$1.5 trillion was an acceptable cost to give billionaires and corporations in a giant tax cut, which created a huge deficit—now believes that the cost of helping 83,000 sick veterans is just too high.

This is incomprehensibly cruel. When are the American people going to wake up and see what the Trump administration is doing? He gives tax breaks to billionaires but no benefits to veterans who are suffering from the result of Agent Orange exposure?

My home State of New York has 240,000 veterans from the Vietnam era. Many of them were exposed to Agent Orange without realizing it. Just yesterday, the Buffalo News profiled the life of Vietnam veteran Dick Gabel, who was drafted into the Army at age 19. In his approximately 2 years of service, he was shot in the leg. He recovered and was sent back to the war. He lost many of his closest friends along the way. After he came home, for decades, Dick worked with kids in his hometown to make Veterans Day an annual highlight, and he brought together hundreds of veterans to volunteer at local schools. Just last year, he was diagnosed with leukemia, possibly because of his exposure to Agent Orange.

There are likely thousands of veterans in New York who are like Dick—fighting illnesses that are directly linked to Agent Orange and their military service in Vietnam. Yet, because they got the wrong disease, the Trump administration is blocking their health benefits.

So today—a day after millions of Americans, myself included, marched in the parades across our country to

honor our vets—I demand that Chief of Staff Mulvaney reverse this cruel and unfair decision immediately.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I start by thanking the Democratic leader for his leadership in raising those important issues before the Senate this afternoon.

I bring another issue before the Senate, that being my strong opposition to President Trump's shameful decision to invite Turkish President Erdogan to the White House tomorrow. It is a decision that has alarmed our allies and comforted our adversaries. It is a decision that undermines our values and our national security interests, and it is a decision that sends a terrible message to the world about how to get invited to President Trump's White House.

In just the last 5 weeks, Turkish President Erdogan has taken the following actions: No. 1, he has launched an attack on a key ally of ours—in fact, the key ally—in our fight against ISIS terrorists, that being the Syrian Democratic Forces, led by the Syrian Kurds. No. 2, President Erdogan and his forces have killed over 200 in these attacks, displaced over 300,000, and enabled the release of over 100 ISIS prisoners. No. 3, Erdogan is using jihadi proxies that include a lot of al-Qaida elements, and they are committing gross human rights abuses, including what the Trump administration has acknowledged as being war crimes. There are also reports that the Turkish-backed proxy forces are using the chemical agent white phosphorus. No. 4, Erdogan and his forces have violated the so-called safe zone agreement that was reached by Vice President PENCE in Ankara a few weeks ago. After President Erdogan entered into that agreement with Vice President PENCE, which has been violated, he turned around and decided to cut a separate deal with Putin and Russia, thereby giving Russia even more leverage than it already had in Syria.

In addition, Erdogan boasted that he organized a hit squad to assassinate the top commander of our Syrian Kurdish allies, General Mazloum. President Erdogan did that even after President Trump acknowledged that our Syrian Kurdish allies had given us important information that had helped us to kill ISIS leader Baghdadi. In fact, Erdogan has compared the military leader of our Syrian Kurdish allies—those who bore the brunt of the fight against ISIS—with the ISIS leader whom we just killed, Baghdadi. President Erdogan did all of that in just the last 5 weeks.

What did President Trump do?

Instead of calling upon the House and the Senate to pass the economic sanctions bill that had been introduced, he rewarded Erdogan for all of those actions with a coveted White House meeting.

That is not the way we should be treating somebody who has just spent the last 5 weeks thumbing his nose at the United States, undermining our interests, endangering our allies, strengthening Russia, Assad, and Iran, and increasing threats to our ally Israel.

It sends a terrible message to the world: Go ahead and undermine the national security interests of the United States, and the President of the United States will invite you over for dinner.

I have teamed up with Senator GRAHAM and others on a bipartisan basis, and I want to thank the Presiding Officer for her support on that sanctions legislation to hold Turkey accountable.

Here is what Senator GRAHAM said about President Erdogan just 3 weeks ago: "If you want to get Erdogan's attention, you have to treat him like the thug he is." That is Senator GRAHAM speaking. Yet Erdogan, time and again over the last 5 weeks and before, has essentially spit in the eye of the United States, and now he is coming to Washington for a White House meeting. This is very difficult to explain. I am not sure any of us has the answer as to why President Trump is doing this.

The Washington Post had an article on October 17 headlined "In Turkey's President, Trump seems to have found a soul mate." If you read through the article, you can see that President Trump does seem to have an affinity for President Erdogan of Turkey, and clearly President Erdogan likes to get on the phone with President Trump because whenever he does, President Erdogan seems to get his way.

Now he will come for a face-to-face meeting, and I am sure President Erdogan expects to get his way again. Why would he think that? Well, because the last time they talked, President Erdogan clearly took away from the conversation that it was just fine with President Trump if Turkey attacked our Syrian Kurdish allies. President Erdogan clearly believed he had the green light. In fact, after they hung up from that phone call, President Erdogan sent his forces and used proxy forces to attack our Syrian Kurdish allies, and President Trump tweeted that we were withdrawing some of our Special Forces from the area—Special Forces that had helped deter Turkish aggression against our Syrian Kurdish allies.

It is very rare for retired senior military leaders in the United States to criticize a sitting Commander in Chief, but the betrayal of our Syrian Kurdish allies and the terrible message that sent around the world about the unreliability of the United States compelled many of those former leaders to warn about the consequences. I think it is important for the Senate to hear some comments from people who are respected for what they have done for our country.

ADM William McRaven, former commander of the U.S. Special Operations Command, who worked with our Syrian

Kurdish allies in the fight against ISIS, said: “He’s”—referring to President Trump—“obviously left our allies the Kurds on the battlefield. . . . We feel like we’ve betrayed them. He’s undermined our NATO allies . . . the international community has lost faith in America.” That is from Admiral McRaven.

GEN Joseph Votel, former commander of U.S. Central Command and also somebody who has personal experience working alongside our Syrian Kurdish allies in the fight against ISIS, said: “This policy abandonment threatens to undo five years’ worth of fighting against ISIS and will severely damage American credibility and reliability in any future fights where we need strong allies.”

General Petraeus, former commander of U.S. Central Command and former commander of NATO’s mission in Afghanistan and in Iraq, said: “Well, I think we have abandoned our Syrian Kurdish partners. They took over 10,000 losses as the defeat of the Islamic State was carried out.”

Secretary James Mattis, Secretary of Defense under President Trump and former commander of U.S. Central Command, said: “In this case, if we don’t keep the pressure on, then ISIS will resurge.”

Secretary Mattis made it clear that by abandoning our Syrian Kurdish allies, we gave more oxygen to ISIS. In fact, we learned over the weekend that ISIS was claiming responsibility for the murder of an Armenian Catholic priest and his son. Their funeral services are today.

Another former high-level U.S. military commander who has spoken is ADM James Stavridis. He is the former commander of U.S. European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. Here is what he had to say: “This is heart-rending for anybody who has shed blood, who has deployed forward. . . . I’m getting so many inputs from all around the military . . . they know how this hurts at a very personal level. . . . It’s not only the betrayal of the Kurds, it is the way it is going to allow those embers on the floor of the forest fire that we thought were out to kind of re-flash.” He is saying, in other words, giving more oxygen to the ISIS embers that we were working toward extinguishing.

Gen. John Allen, former commander of NATO International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces—Afghanistan, was even blunter: “There is blood on Trump’s hands for abandoning our Kurdish allies.”

Those are from former top U.S. military leaders, patriots who fought with our Syrian Kurdish allies in the fight against ISIS.

There is also a statement from Brett McGurk. So who is Brett McGurk? Brett McGurk was the Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS. He had that position under the previous President and for President Trump for a time. Here is

what Brett McGurk had to say: “I’ve worked for three presidents and participated in a number of foreign leader calls. I cannot recall a President that seems to believe—and then parrots—whatever a foreign leader tells him on the phone. Such information is often false, intended to influence more than inform.” Yet what we saw was that when President Trump hung up on that phone call with President Erdogan, he essentially green-lighted that operation. That is why President Erdogan likes to get President Trump on the phone directly or talk to him directly, which he is going to get a chance to do tomorrow.

Probably the most damning of all the comments I have heard—and this was not unique, but it was unique in the way it was characterized—came from the mother of a cadet at the Naval Academy. What was interesting is that she has been a loyal supporter of President Trump. She supported him, she voted for him, and she stuck with him, but after the betrayal of our Syrian Kurdish allies, she said that she no longer could trust him and that she worried that her son at the Naval Academy would essentially be left to the whims of a Commander in Chief whom she could no longer trust. That was all before President Trump invited President Erdogan to the White House.

What we should be doing is passing tough economic sanctions. What we should be doing is holding Turkey and President Erdogan accountable for undermining our security and helping to give new oxygen to ISIS. That is why the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan sanctions bill by a whopping veto-proof vote of 403 to 16. That is why Senator GRAHAM and I have introduced bipartisan sanctions legislation in the U.S. Senate, which has more than 14 bipartisan cosponsors and growing. I do want to thank the Presiding Officer for her efforts to hold President Erdogan accountable with this legislation. There is also other legislation introduced by Senator MENENDEZ and Senator RISCH.

Here is what I know: The most important thing is that this body, the Senate, should act right now. We have the House bill sitting at the desk. We have the bill introduced by Senator GRAHAM and me sitting at the desk. Right now we should just pass those sanctions bills and send a message to President Erdogan that while he may be going to the White House tomorrow, he does not have support in the Congress.

I have talked about Erdogan’s actions for the last 5 weeks. I would like to take us back 5 years from the period we are in right now. In the fall of that year, mid-September 2014, ISIS terrorist forces were encircling the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobani. Kobani is a town on the Syrian side of the Turkey-Syria border. ISIS was laying siege to that town. They had already taken a lot of the surrounding villages, and they were closing in on this last Syrian Kurdish stronghold.

The Syrian Kurds were totally outnumbered by ISIS, and the Syrian Kurds asked the United States for help. It took us a little longer than it should have—took us weeks, not days—but we agreed to help supply our Syrian Kurdish allies with weapons and equipment in the fight against ISIS.

We asked Turkey if they would help us supply weapons to the Syrian Kurds because Kobani is right there on the Syria-Turkey border. Turkey refused. President Erdogan said no. So the United States, at greater risk to our own forces, had to airdrop weapons and supplies into Iraq from U.S. aircraft, and with that help, our Syrian Kurdish forces were able to stop ISIS from taking over Kobani and began to push them out and, again with our help, primarily from the air, pushed them out. In that fight over the last 5 years, the Syrian Kurds have lost over 11,000 men and women, soldiers and others. That is what they have lost in the fight with us against ISIS.

Turkey, on the other hand, not only did not lift a finger in that fight, but for the past 5 years and even more the years before, they turned a blind eye to ISIS fighters transiting through Turkey, so ISIS was growing stronger as a result of their negligence.

I want to close by responding to those who say: Well, you know what, Turkey is a NATO ally, and so we should invite President Erdogan over to the White House.

I see on the floor my friend and colleague, Senator DURBIN from Illinois, and he, along with myself and others, has made this point repeatedly. We would like Turkey to be a strong NATO ally. Over the years of NATO alliance, they have in the past been a good partner, but under President Erdogan’s leadership, they have taken Turkey in a very different direction.

The issue is not whether the United States wants Turkey to be a member of NATO; the question is, Does Turkey really want to stay in the alliance? Because everything they have done shows they are violating the values and principles of our alliance.

President Erdogan decided to purchase the Russian-made S-400 anti-aircraft system against our strong objection. This is a system that would have put our F-35 pilots at risk and undermined NATO security. President Erdogan said he didn’t care. He went ahead with the S-400 purchase, and those S-400s are sitting in Turkey right now.

He was willing to work with Russia, Iran, Assad to undermine our interests in the area. We have talked today about how he attacked our Syrian Kurdish allies. He has repeatedly threatened the European Parliament, European Union, with releasing refugees if they do not cooperate with him and don’t turn a blind eye to the fact that he has locked up more journalists than any other country on earth, including Iran, Egypt, North Korea, and Saudi Arabia.

So, Madam President, the fact that the President of the United States has invited Erdogan to the White House, after everything Erdogan has done to undermine our values and security, is a shame on the United States. It will undermine our national security interests. It has already alarmed our allies and heartened our adversaries.

It is important that all of us—all of us in this House and Senate—on a bipartisan basis, speak out—as we have been doing—against the shameful chapter in our American foreign policy and national security.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The gentleman from Iowa is recognized.

COUNTERFEITERS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Today I am here to discuss the critical need to protect American businesses and consumers from the dangers of counterfeits, particularly counterfeit goods sold online.

Counterfeits do incredible damage to our country's economic competitiveness. They harm intellectual property right holders and the reputation of online marketplaces, undermine the integrity of our supply chains, and even threaten the health and safety of consumers. So it is Congress's responsibility to use its oversight and legislative authority to identify ways to prevent these illicit goods from entering our borders.

Over the past year, I have worked with the Finance Committee Ranking Member WYDEN to investigate how counterfeiters use e-commerce to sell their phony goods to consumers. Last week, we concluded our investigation and issued a report detailing our findings.

Based on the information presented to Senator WYDEN and this Senator by right holders, trade associations, e-commerce platforms, and common carriers, we made five findings in this report, and we identified two legislative recommendations for Congress in this report. I believe these recommendations will enhance existing efforts within the Federal Government to prevent the sale of counterfeits online.

I will talk briefly about our findings today, and I look forward to working with my colleagues—both Republican and Democrat—to identify additional areas for congressional action.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I recognize the value of intellectual property rights and their impacts on society and the economy. Intellectual property rights allow businesses to generate new ideas and develop creative solutions to everyday problems that can make our lives healthier, safer, and more productive. I also understand businesses and innovators rely on those rights to help drive and recoup their investments.

In my own State of Iowa, intellectual property represents more than \$14.4 billion in annual exports for the State, more than 94,000 jobs, and supports more than 2,000 small businesses with

less than 500 employees. However, counterfeits are increasingly threatening these achievements and the hard work of the people that innovate. It has been estimated that international trade for counterfeit goods in 2016 accounted for \$509 billion of world trade.

Counterfeits are found in both physical and online marketplaces, and almost every industry is affected. Scam artists target electronics, automotive parts, and even children's toys, to rip-off consumers and to make a profit. Counterfeits can also harm consumers. Many consumers do not know that counterfeits can be dangerous and that some have been found to contain lead, excessive small parts, and even unsafe chemicals.

In 2018, the Government Accountability Office—or GAO, as we know it around Washington—examined how e-commerce marketplaces are further enabling the sale of counterfeits. GAO found that counterfeiters use online marketplaces to sell fakes to consumers because they can hide their identity by using false or incomplete names. Counterfeiters also post legitimate photos or fake reviews for their products, which makes it harder for consumers to determine whether they are buying a legitimate or fake good.

The Grassley-Wyden investigation showed that the breadth and variety of goods sold online makes it nearly impossible to prevent the sale of all counterfeits. Right holders also told us that their enforcement efforts are hindered in part because the U.S. Customs and Border Protection shares very limited—and often heavily redacted—importation information with these right holders. But right holders need importation information to identify counterfeit sellers and report suspected counterfeit listings.

Counterfeits also pose a threat to e-commerce and to common carriers. Counterfeits smear the reputation of e-commerce and threaten the integrity of the common carrier supply chain network. As such, these parties are critical partners in the fight against the sale of counterfeit goods. However, Customs and Border Protection does not have the authority to share importation information with these parties when it identifies a counterfeit at our border.

During our investigation, these parties told us that this information would give them the ability to better protect our country's intellectual property and allow them to remove more counterfeit listings and block counterfeit sellers. We must look at this problem holistically and with the understanding that right holders, e-commerce platforms, and common carriers are critical partners in the fight against the sale of counterfeit goods and those counterfeit goods being sold online. By sharing more importation information, these parties can better protect the intellectual property rights of our innovators, as well as the health and safety of e-commerce consumers.

Our investigation is but a first step. I will continue to use my oversight authority to look for innovative solutions to protect intellectual property right holders and consumers from the negative effects of counterfeits.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The Senator from Illinois.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I was honored today to attend the second hearing I have attended in the Supreme Court of the United States. If you stand right here on the floor of the Senate and look east through these glass doors, you can almost see the Supreme Court buildings directly across the street. The Supreme Court is, many times, the last stop when it comes to human rights and civil rights. After all the work that has been done by the Congress, by the President, many times, it is the Supreme Court that has the last word.

In the case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, when the Supreme Court held that segregation was constitutional, that last word was a disappointment. And *Korematsu v. The United States*, when the Supreme Court upheld the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, that was another disappointment.

But other times, the Supreme Court has risen to the challenge: The famous case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*, which finally struck down the concept of separate but equal; *Obergefell vs. Hodges*, where the Supreme Court recognized the right to marriage equality.

Well, today, the Supreme Court faces another human rights issue involving another group. Just a few hours ago, the street between the Capitol and the Supreme Court was literally filled with thousands and thousands of demonstrators. The issue before the Court today was the fate of DACA, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

This measure, DACA, is one that I have worked on for many years—many years. Nineteen years ago, I introduced the DREAM Act. Before that, the term “Dreamer” was hardly ever applied in the conversation about immigration, but now, it has become standard and really defines this group of Americans, people living in America.

In their case, they came to the United States, brought here by their parents, when they were children. They may have had legal entry into the United States, but at some point in their lives, they no longer were legal. They became undocumented, in the words of the law. Most of these young people never knew that status until they reached their teenage years and their parents finally told them the truth of their legal condition.

They had no control over the decision of their parents to come to this country or file the necessary papers. Frankly, many of them were shocked to learn that they were undocumented. They went to school with our kids. They grew up in our communities.