

being able to build critical, personal connections on the campaign trail. Had Speaker PELOSI immediately transmitted the Articles of Impeachment at the end of last year, it would have been the first item on the Senate's agenda when we reconvened in January. We could have used the Clinton model to guide the process, the same process the leader has promised since before the articles even passed.

I can't help but imagine that the Senate and the American people would be close to putting this entire saga behind us, but, instead, the Speaker sat on the articles. She stood in the way of the Senate's duty to try the impeachment trial, and she stood in the way of President Trump's due process rights.

The only people who seem to gain anything from this are the Democrats who are running for President but who are not U.S. Senators and, thus, aren't going to be tied up during the impeachment trial. Oddly enough, one of these candidates and his son are looming figures in the impeachment inquiry. If you are Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg, or any other candidate who isn't a Member of the Senate, you have to be glad that the Speaker sat on these articles for nearly 4 weeks. Having your competitors stuck in Washington, literally in their seats, while you are hitting the campaign trail there—well, that seems like a pretty good advantage to me.

The timeline the Speaker created is all but sure to interfere with the Iowa caucuses. It is remarkable that Democrats' effort to impeach a President of the opposing party could end up having a negative impact on the Presidential candidates of their own. All of this is to say, it is time to bring this embarrassing chapter to an end.

Republicans and Democrats and the American people all agree that it is time to get the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate so that we can try the case according to our duties under the Constitution and the American people and the Congress can move on.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The 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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the President of the United States is charged with committing a grave injury to our democracy: trying to shake down a foreign leader to get him to interfere in our elections, using the powers of his public office to benefit himself and jaundice our elections. These are the kinds of actions the Framers of our Constitution most

feared when they forged the impeachment powers of the Congress.

The House of Representatives decided the President's conduct warranted his impeachment. The Senate's constitutional duty now is to try that case to the best of our ability with honesty, with integrity, with impartiality, and with fairness.

A fair trial is one that considers all the facts and gives the Senators all the information they need to make an informed decision. That means relevant witnesses. That means relevant documents. That means the truth. Without these things, a Senate trial would become a farce, a nationally televised meeting of the mock trial club.

There is a reason that, with one exception, every impeachment trial of any official in the history of the United States has featured witnesses. That one exception was the trial of a fellow Senator in the 18th century, and the question of his impeachment was dismissed on jurisdictional grounds before the issue of witnesses could ever come up. Every other trial has had witnesses. So when Leader MCCONNELL talks precedent, he is talking about witnesses, plain and simple.

The Democratic request for four fact witnesses and three specific sets of relevant documents is very much in line with our history. We don't know what those witnesses will say. We don't know what those documents will reveal. They could help the President's case, or they could hurt it. Regardless of the consequences for the President, Democrats are on a quest for the truth.

At the moment, Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans are opposing witnesses and documents, but they can't seem to muster a real reason why. Instead, Leader MCCONNELL and the Republican leadership have labeled a Democratic request for witnesses and documents as "political." If seeking the truth is political, if doing our constitutional duty is political in the minds of our Republican colleagues, then the Republican Party is in trouble. History is not kind to political parties that fight to hide the truth. History is not kind to parties that participate in coverups.

If anything, these absurd accusations by Republicans demonstrate just how unable Republicans have been to make an affirmative case about why the Senate shouldn't ask for evidence. The Republican argument against calling witnesses is basically nonexistent. The most commonly repeated talking point from the other side is that we should follow the example of the 1999 Clinton trial by deciding on witnesses after both sides complete their presentations.

Republicans are so unwilling to argue against witnesses, they can only support delaying the decision, like a broken Magic 8 Ball that keeps saying "Ask again later." Leader MCCONNELL has represented his position as being fair and open-minded. He has said he is not foreclosing the possibility of wit-

nesses—the Senate should just discuss them later. As I have made clear, this makes no sense from a trial perspective. Why should both sides make their entire presentations before even considering requesting evidence? Leader MCCONNELL's proposal is completely backward and through the looking glass.

Let's consider what, practically speaking, Leader MCCONNELL is suggesting when he claims to be open to witnesses at a later date. What does he really mean when he says that?

In the 1999 Clinton trial, the Senate waited 3 weeks into the trial to confront the issue of witnesses. Once they decided on three witnesses, with the support of several Senate Republicans here today, including Leader MCCONNELL, it took time for the witnesses to be deposed and for the Senate to consider what they had submitted. Ultimately, the Clinton trial ran for 2 more weeks.

I want my fellow Republican Senators to ask themselves: After the Senate concludes the part of the trial that Leader MCCONNELL wants to get through, do you think he really wants to extend the trial by several weeks? Leader MCCONNELL has gone on record and said that he wants the trial to span 2 weeks total. Leader MCCONNELL has gone on record and said: "After we've heard the arguments, we ought to vote and move on."

Are we to believe that Leader MCCONNELL, after 2 weeks is up, will really have an open mind about extending the trial several more weeks, or does he want to delay the question of witnesses and documents until later and then, when the time comes, exert enormous pressure on Republicans to reject them to avoid prolonging the trial? He will say: We can't go on any further; let's just end it. Every Republican—every Republican—should ask themselves that question.

Democrats are not advocating a lengthy and drawn-out trial. That is why we proposed handling this issue up front, so evidence can be part of the presentations and so we don't have to extend the trial unnecessarily. We have proposed a schedule that would save the Senate a whole lot of time.

Before voting on a resolution that would punt the question of witnesses until after all the presentations are complete, Senate Republicans must ask themselves: What are Leader MCCONNELL's true intentions?

IRAN

Over the past 3 years, the President's impulsive and erratic approach to foreign policy has made America less safe and less respected. Whether it is Syria or North Korea or Russia, the President's actions have failed to advance our national security—in some cases, failed miserably.

Now, after the aftermath of the U.S. strike on General Soleimani, the President and his foreign policy team have insisted that "the world is a much safer place today." That is what Secretary Pompeo said. In recent weeks,

however, the President's actions have increased the risk of Iran rushing to develop a nuclear weapon, weakened our ability to fight ISIS, and strengthened the hands of Russia and China in the Middle East, at America's expense. How in the world is the world "a much safer place today" than when President Trump took office? It is not.

Every American should ask themselves this question: Are we safer today after these actions, with Russia and China on the ascent, with our ability to fight ISIS weakened, and with Iran rushing to make a nuclear weapon? Every American should ask this question.

As we continue to grapple with the fallout from the President's actions, there are several points for my colleagues to consider. The Trump administration has not been transparent with Congress or the American people. The Trump administration did not consult with Congress prior to the strike on Soleimani and had classified the War Powers Act notification sent to Congress without any justification. There is no reason much of it should be classified.

It took over a week for the administration to conduct a briefing for the Senate about the strike and then the briefers, top members of the administration, practically ran out of the room after only a few questions, putting the "brief" in briefing.

Today Secretary Pompeo refused to testify in the House about the administration's decisions. On something as serious as the current situation in Iran, the administration's lack of transparency has been completely unacceptable. While the President has promised to keep us out of endless wars in the Middle East, his actions have moved us closer to exactly such a war, making the American people and American forces less safe.

While I am thankful that nobody was hurt by Iran's retaliatory missile strikes last week, there are several reasons to be concerned. Iran can strike us in other ways in the months ahead with cyber warfare, proxies, or established terror networks that have destabilized the Middle East for decades. The Supreme Leader himself has said the recent strikes on U.S. installations in Iraq were just "one slap" and "not enough." Iran has also announced it will no longer abide by any restraints on its nuclear program.

The President has tweeted "all is well" with Iran now. You would have to be delusional to believe that. It is sort of like saying North Korea is no longer a nuclear threat.

In many ways, the President has made Americans less safe. Unfortunately, what is happening with Iran is typical of how the President has conducted foreign policy over the last 3 years—erratic, impulsive, and without regard for long-term consequences. As a result, the President's foreign policy is dangerously incompetent.

We cannot say that any major problem area around the globe was better

off than it was 3 years ago. Because of all this—because of this erratic, impulsive foreign policy—the Senate must not allow the President to proceed unchecked. Senator Kaine's War Powers Resolution is needed now more than ever, and I am glad the Senate will consider the resolution this week.

Senator Sanders also has a bill that would deny funding for a war with Iran. We should consider that legislation, which I cosponsored as well. As the situation with Iran continues to evolve, the administration must come back and finish what they barely started last week, keeping Congress briefed and up to speed with all major developments, troop deployments, and strategy.

On matters of war and peace, for the safety of our troops, the security of our Nation is at stake. Congressional oversight and congressional prerogatives are not optional; they are mandatory.

CHINA TRADE AGREEMENT

Madam President, finally, on China.

Later this week, China and the United States will participate in a signing ceremony for a so-called phase one of the trade agreement, in which President Trump has agreed to cut some tariffs on Chinese goods in return for temporary assurances with China to buy more agricultural products from the United States.

After 18 months, the President's phase one deal with China is stunning in how little substance it achieves at such a high cost. It fails to address deep structural disparities in our trade relationship with China—disparities that will harm American workers and businesses for years. It also seems like this deal could send a signal to Chinese negotiators that the United States can be steamrolled and that President Trump can be played every time.

Now, I have publicly praised President Trump when he has taken a tough stance with trade negotiations with China at some political risk. I have said his instincts on China were even better than President Bush's and Obama's. So I come to this as someone who is truly rooting for the President to succeed. For these reasons, I am even more disappointed in what President Trump has managed to achieve—or, rather, failed to achieve.

According to public reports and by the administration's own admission, this deal does little to end China's greatest trade abuses. It does not secure commitments on state-sponsored cyber theft, China's massive subsidies to domestic industries, preferential treatment to state-owned enterprises or dumping Chinese goods into the U.S. market.

In signing this agreement, President Trump removes our most effective source of leverage in exchange for mediocre, temporary agriculture concessions, which may not even come to pass, given China's past history. Essentially, President Trump is selling China the farm in exchange for a few magic beans—in this case, soybeans.

The American people need to understand exactly what is in this phase one deal before the United States agrees to continue negotiations with China. So today I am sending the President a letter with a series of crucial questions: What commitments, if any, has China made with regard to its harmful government subsidy programs? What commitments, if any, has China made concerning their state-owned enterprises? What about its practice of dumping products into our markets or their state-sanctioned cyber theft? What help will be afforded to our farmers who have lost billions in the last 2 years, when China has already signed many long-term contracts with other soybean producers in places like Argentina and Brazil?

These issues must be resolved before we move forward, but I fear that after months of costly negotiations, President Trump—facing the election—has sold out American farmers, businesses, and workers in exchange for a photo op.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

IMPEACHMENT

Ms. HARRIS. Madam President, just across the street from where I stand today is the U.S. Supreme Court. That building has four words etched in marble above its entrance: "Equal Justice Under Law."

The promise of those four words is that in our country, our system of justice must treat everyone equally regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status, but too many people in our country grow up knowing and experiencing that in America we have two systems of justice—one in which certain people are held accountable and another in which powerful people like Donald Trump escape accountability altogether.

This has been true from the first days of our Nation's history, when a group of men gathered in Philadelphia to debate lofty notions of justice and equality, yet produced a document that literally counted Black Americans as fractions of a person.

In the Declaration of Independence, we were told that "all men are created equal," but we know that in our Nation's founding at that time, the policy of our Nation was to rob indigenous people of their land and their livelihood and to exclude women from the right to vote.

So to make true the promise of America and move us toward a more perfect Union, people have organized and fought and marched for justice. From the suffragettes to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., those fights have won us progress toward a more just and inclusive nation, but, clearly, there is still more work to be done to achieve equal justice under law.

When the determination of whether you sit in jail before trial is too often based on the size of your bank account