

civil servants. This was a predetermined political conclusion. Members of her conference had been publicly promising it literally for years.

That is why the investigation stopped long before the House had come anywhere near proving what they allege. They pulled the plug early because the facts were never the point. They were never the point. The point was to check a political box.

For goodness' sake, the very morning after the House's historic vote, Speaker PELOSI literally chastised reporters for asking too many questions about impeachment. She tried to change the subject to economic policy. She said:

Any other questions? . . . Anybody want to talk about the SALT tax. . . . I'm not going to answer any more questions on this—

Referring to impeachment.

Really? Really? You impeach a President of the United States, and the very next morning, there is nothing to see here? Does that sound like the Speaker of the House really thinks the survival of the Republic is on the line? Does anyone really think that if Democrats truly believe the President of the United States was a criminal who is imperiling our country, they would have abandoned the search for evidence because they didn't want to make time for due process; that they would have pulled the plug on the investigation just because it sounded good to finish by Christmas; that they would have delayed the trial for months while they test-drove new talking points; that they would have been trying to change the subject 12 hours after the vote?

I cannot say what Democrats do and do not really believe, but they certainly do not seem to display the urgency or the seriousness you would expect from people who actually thought they had proven the President should be removed.

On television last weekend, the Speaker bragged that "this President is impeached for life," regardless of what the Senate does—regardless of what the Senate does, as if the ultimate verdict were sort of an afterthought.

Likewise, the Senate Democratic leader recently said that as long as he can try to use the trial process to hurt some Republicans' reelection chances, "it's a win-win." That is what this is all about. The Democratic leader just laid it right out there in case anybody had any doubt.

What a revealing admission. Forget about the fate of the Presidency. Forget about the Constitution. As long as the process helps Democrats' political fortunes, our Democratic colleagues call it a "win-win." Do these sound like leaders who really believe we are in a constitutional crisis, one that requires the most severe remedy in our entire system of government? Does it sound like that?

Here is how deep we have come into bizarro world. The latest Democratic talking point is, if the Senate conducts a trial based on what the House itself

looked at, we will be engaged in a coverup. Did you get that? Unless the Senate steps outside of our lane and takes it upon ourselves to supplement the House case, it is a coverup?

Do they think the entire country has forgotten what they were saying just a couple of days ago? We heard over and over that the House case, on its own, was totally damning and convincing. That is what they were saying a few days ago.

Clearly, a majority of the House felt that it was sufficient to impeach, and a number of Senate Democrats were happy to prejudice the case publicly and suggest the House had proven enough for removal.

But now, all of a sudden, the story has reversed. Now, we hardly know anything. Now, the investigation is just beginning. Now, what the House has produced is so weak that they are calling their own investigation a coverup. Who would be the author of this coverup—Chairman SCHIFF?

We have arrived at a simple contradiction. Two things cannot both be true. House Democrats' case cannot simultaneously be so robust that it was enough to impeach in the first place but also so weak that the Senate needs to go fishing. If the existing case is strong, there is no need for the judge and the jury to reopen the investigation.

If the existing case is weak, House Democrats should not have impeached in the first place. I think I am beginning to understand why the Speaker wanted to change the subject to tax policy. Unfortunately, no matter how irresponsibly this has been handled across the Capitol, impeachment is not a political game, and the U.S. Senate will not treat it like one.

A House majority fueled by political animus may have started this with frivolity, but it will fall to the Senate—to the Senate—to end it with seriousness and sobriety. It will fall to us to do what the Founders intended: to take the long view, to move beyond partisan passions, and to do what the long-term good of our institution and our Nation demands.

#### IRAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, every day brings more repudiation of the conventional wisdom of the Democratic foreign policy establishment, breathlessly—breathlessly—amplified by the mainstream media, that the strike on Soleimani would unite Iranians behind the regime. Remember, that is what they were all saying, that the strike on Soleimani would unite Iranians behind the regime. Proud Iranians continue, however, to take to the streets not to rage against America or Israel but to vent their frustration against the corrupt, theocratic regime that has led Iran down a ruinous path.

I spoke about these protests before the strike on Soleimani, and I will continue to speak out about them. I have

long believed the United States should care about human rights and democracy, whether in Russia, China, Hong Kong, Burma, Cuba, Venezuela, Afghanistan, Syria, or Iran. The promotion of human rights and the defense of democracy should not necessarily be the driving force of our foreign policy, but it should be an important component.

I ask my Democratic colleagues who share this view to set aside their hatred for Donald Trump—even just for a moment—and to step back to look at what has been happening across Iran for years: the repression of women, the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities, and the brutal suppression of dissent.

Was the Obama administration right to meet the 2009 Green Revolution with silence?

Consider the story of Iran's only female Olympic medalist, who this week defected—defected—from Iran and requested asylum; or the Iranian state TV broadcasters who quit, apologizing to the public for years of lying on behalf of the mullahs; or the innocent protesters who are being killed and wounded by agents of the state.

These are well-known realities. They were well known when, 12 days ago, the United States took the most dangerous terrorist off the battlefield, but mystifyingly, many voices here in Washington and the media sought to blame the escalating tensions in the region on President Trump.

We heard from leading Democrats that the operation to eliminate Soleimani was one of the administration's "needless provocations"—needless provocations. We heard that the cycle of violence was America's responsibility. All of this—all of it—flies in the face of the reasonable analysis some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle were offering before—before—Donald Trump became President.

In 2007, 30 Democratic Senators joined Republicans to support an amendment warning of the need to prevent "Iran from turning Shia militia extremists in Iraq into a Hezbollah-like force that could serve its interests inside Iraq, including by overwhelming, subverting, or coopting institutions of the legitimate government of Iraq." That was back in 2007, with 30 Democrats.

Few more prescient warnings have been pronounced by this body, but, unfortunately, it went unheeded by the Obama administration, which withdrew U.S. forces from Iraq, effectively abandoning it to Soleimani and his proxies.

As recently as 2015, the Democratic leader warned that the JCPAO failed to address Iran's destabilizing malign activities and that Iran would use its windfall to "redouble its efforts to create even more trouble in the Middle East and, perhaps, beyond." That was the Democratic leader in 2015.

Senator MENENDEZ hit the nail on the head as well. He warned: "If there

is a fear of war in the region, it will be fueled by Iran and its proxies and exacerbated by an agreement that allows Iran to possess an industrial-sized nuclear program and enough money in sanctions relief to significantly continue to fund its hegemonic intentions throughout the region." Senator MENENDEZ.

So many of our Democratic colleagues understood all this quite clearly when a Democrat occupied the White House, and it came true. It came true. Iran's aggression only accelerated after the Obama administration's deal. The question for us is not whom to blame. That much is clear. The question is what to do about it.

As Iran's aggression became focused on the United States, as the risk to our personnel and interests grew, after months of repeated warnings, President Trump took action. I am glad the strike against Soleimani has provided some justice—some justice—to his countless victims, hundreds of Americans and many more across the Middle East.

We don't yet know if Soleimani will prove irreplaceable, but his death will significantly disrupt Iran's death machine and will change Iran's long-held misconception that they could literally get away with the murder of Americans without a meaningful response. President Trump's strategy seems to have reestablished deterrence.

The Senate risks jeopardizing what we have gained with this strike if it ties the military's hands and tells Iran that we have no stomach for this. America can hardly be defeated on the battlefield, but we can be defeated at home on the political front. We can allow ourselves to become divided and play into the hands of our adversaries. Our divisions at home are significant. Let us not allow them to pollute our judgment on foreign affairs. Let's not make our adversaries' lives easier by tying our military's hands.

#### 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

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Peter Gaynor, of Rhode Island, to be Administrator of

the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

#### IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, the House of Representatives has impeached the President for a very serious offense: coercing a foreign leader into interfering in our elections, using the powers of the Presidency, the most powerful public office in the Nation, to benefit himself—to actually influence the election, which should be decided by American citizens, not by a foreign power. When debating the impeachment clause of the Constitution, the Founders worried about foreign capitals having undue influence over our country. Hamilton, writing in the *Federalist Papers*, described impeachable offenses as abuses or violations of some public trust.

In the impeachment of President Trump, the question the Senate will be asked to answer is whether the President did, in fact, abuse his public trust and, by doing so, invite the very foreign influence the Founders feared would be a corruption of our democracy. To answer that question, to decide whether the President merits acquittal and removal from office, the Senate must conduct a fair trial. A fair trial has witnesses. A fair trial has relevant documents as a part of the record. A fair trial seeks the truth—no more, no less.

That is why Democrats have asked to call four fact witnesses and subpoena three specific sets of relevant documents related to the President's misconduct with Ukraine. At the moment, my Republican colleagues are opposing these witnesses and documents, but they can't seem to find a real reason why. Most are unwilling to argue that witnesses shouldn't come before the Senate. They can only support delaying the decision until most of the trial is over, like a magic eight ball that keeps saying: Ask again later.

The most the Republican leader can do is smear our request as some partisan fishing expedition intended to damage the President, but the leader himself has warned that the witnesses we have requested might not help the House managers' case against the President. He is right about that. These are the President's top advisers. They are appointed by him, vetted by him. They work with him.

We don't know what those witnesses will say or what the documents will re-

veal. They could hurt the President's case or they could help the President's case. We don't know.

We know one thing. We want the truth on something as weighty and profound as an impeachment trial. Does Leader MCCONNELL want the truth? Do Senate Republicans want the truth?

I would remind the leader that our request for witnesses and documents is very much in line with the Senate's history. The Republican leader keeps citing precedent. Well, here is precedent, Mr. Leader. There have been two Presidential impeachment trials in history. Both—both—had witnesses. The trial of Andrew Johnson had 41 witnesses. There have been 16 completed impeachment trials in the Senate's entire history. In every one, except one, the trial in 1799 of Senator William Blount, which was dismissed on jurisdictional grounds, every Senate impeachment trial in history has included witnesses.

You want precedent? Precedent says witnesses overwhelmingly.

The long arc of history casts a shadow on the proceedings we are about to undertake. It suggests something obvious—that the Senate has always believed trials were about evidence and getting the truth. Of the 16 impeachment trials, 15 had witnesses and 1 was dismissed early. Do Senate Republicans want to break that lengthy historical precedent by conducting the first impeachment trial of a President in history with no witnesses? Let me ask that question again. This is weighty. This is vital. This is about the Republic. Do Senate Republicans want to break the lengthy historical precedent that said witnesses should be at in impeachment trial by conducting the first impeachment trial of the President in history—in history, since 1789—with no witnesses?

I ask that question because that seems to be where the Republican leader wants us to be headed. The Republican leader has designed a schedule for a Senate trial that might—might—have us vote on witnesses and documents after the presentations from both sides have been concluded—the judicial equivalent of putting the cart before the horse. Of course, Leader MCCONNELL has made no guarantee that he will support voting on witnesses and documents at that time—only that supposedly he will be open to the idea.

I want my Republican colleagues to bear in mind that if we consider witnesses at a later date, it could extend the trial by several days, maybe several weeks, as witnesses did during the Clinton trial.

Leader MCCONNELL has said that after the arguments are made, we should vote and move on. Do my Republican colleagues really believe Leader MCCONNELL will have an open mind about witnesses at a later date when they might extend the trial much longer than he wants? I am not in the prediction business, but I can bet that