

is where diplomats and others disagree with the way the President handled himself. Well, fair enough, you are entitled to your opinion, but that doesn't make impeachment the appropriate remedy.

Here we are 11 months more or less until the next general election. I, for one, think it is dangerous to have 535 Members of Congress essentially be asked to convict and remove a President 11 months before the next general election; in other words, to substitute our views with those of the voters, the American people. I think that is very dangerous. If it succeeds here, I guarantee this will not be the last time.

Unfortunately, the House has normalized this concept of impeachment essentially for political differences. That is a dangerous concept, and it would be a dangerous precedent if we were to accept it.

This is the third time in American history—the history of our entire country—where this process will go forward in the Senate. We need to be very careful, very sober, very serious, and very deliberate in how we conduct ourselves and how we conduct this trial.

Unfortunately, Speaker PELOSI has violated her own admonition when, in March of 2019, she said that impeachment is too divisive, and it is just not worth it unless it is bipartisan, unless it is compelling. Well, this impeachment is neither bipartisan nor compelling. Speaker PELOSI apparently got stampeded by the more radical members of her caucus into this position, which now she is trying to find some face-saving way out. That is what this is about.

In the end, we know the politics, unfortunately, will continue in the Senate. We know that under the present circumstances, it is highly unlikely that 67 Senators, based on the record we know now, would vote to convict and remove the President. So what is all this posturing and grandstanding about with regard to witnesses or no witnesses—which I said earlier is a false choice. There will be witnesses, and there will be evidence. We are going to let the parties present it, and we are going to listen and make a decision.

This is about the Democratic leader trying to put incumbent Senators who are on the ballot in 2020 in a tough position. That is what this is all about.

In the end, this is not about President Trump. This is about who is going to maintain the majority in the Senate—whether Republicans will or whether the Democratic leader will accomplish his life's dream and become the next majority leader. That is what this is about.

Well, unfortunately, the Speaker's senseless delay tactics have robbed us all of the valuable time that we could have spent conducting this trial and moving on to more constructive business. We are waiting for the Speaker to deliver the articles, but in the meantime we are not sitting around twiddling our thumbs.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. President, last week, the Senate Finance Committee overwhelmingly passed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement, which will replace NAFTA and guide our trade with Mexico and Canada into the future. This is a big deal for Texas and a big deal for the country. About 13 million jobs depend on trade between Mexico, Canada, and the United States.

We waited a long time for the opportunity to take up the USMCA. The heads of all three countries initially signed the deal back in November of 2019, and for over a year this is another example of the House foot-dragging.

At several points, we were left wondering whether the Speaker would intentionally blow up the trade deal over their own political motivations, but fortunately that didn't happen. We had a long delay, but we are finally to the point where the Senate can take up and pass the USMCA now that the House acted just before Christmas. This week, several Senate committees will review various portions of the agreement, and I hope we can actually get this trade agreement approved before we go to the impeachment trial. We will have the War Powers Resolution, which is privileged, and so that will come first, but hopefully there will be an opportunity to pass the USMCA before we go to this impeachment trial.

I have heard from countless of my constituents whose livelihoods depend on strong international trade, particularly with our southern neighbor, and they are eager to see this USMCA put to bed. It is frustrating that this process has already been prolonged and uncertainty has prevailed and kept farmers, ranchers, and manufacturers waiting for months on end, not knowing what ultimately would happen with the USMCA.

So I am ready for the Speaker to deliver her promise and finally transmit the Articles of Impeachment to the Senate so we can conduct that sober, deliberate trial according to the Constitution and then move on from these partisan games and get back to the work we were sent here to do.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to finish my remarks before the vote is called. I don't anticipate I will take very long.

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

NOMINATION OF PETER GAYNOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to support the nomination of Peter T. Gaynor to be the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA.

I have known and worked with Pete Gaynor for over a decade. Before taking over as FEMA Deputy Administrator in 2018 and becoming the Acting Administrator in 2019, Pete was the

emergency management director for the city of Providence and then the State of Rhode Island.

As a U.S. marine, he was on duty near the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and helped direct important aspects of the response and recovery efforts in the days and weeks that followed. Later, he went on to serve in U.S. operations in Iraq before returning home to Rhode Island.

As EMA, emergency management agency director in Rhode Island, Pete led the response to federally declared disasters in our State and worked to successfully earn national emergency management accreditation for both the Providence and Rhode Island emergency management agencies. I know he will tap this full experience to serve the American people as FEMA Administrator, and FEMA needs solid leadership.

Indeed, as the flagship Federal Agency for disaster preparedness and response, FEMA faces extraordinary challenges, confronting the very real effects of climate-related disasters, reforming the National Flood Insurance Program, administering critical grant programs, and helping ready the Nation for possible chemical, biological, and radiological attacks.

Make no mistake, I have deep concerns about many aspects of the administration's approach to disaster recovery. Puerto Rico is a case in point. Now it is facing new challenges. As ranking member of the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee, I have been dismayed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development's slow-walking of billions of dollars of disaster recovery assistance for Puerto Rico.

As the lead Agency for disaster response and recovery, FEMA must set the standard for professionalism and compassion for people and communities going through the worst experience of their lives. It is my expectation and my confidence that Peter Gaynor will work to make sure it happens.

I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to confirm him.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays on the pending nomination of Peter Gaynor to be the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gaynor nomination?

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER),

the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 81, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 12 Ex.]

YEAS—81

Alexander	Feinstein	Peters
Baldwin	Fischer	Portman
Barrasso	Gardner	Reed
Bennet	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rosen
Boozman	Heinrich	Rounds
Braun	Hirono	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Sasse
Cantwell	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Capito	Jones	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Carpenter	King	Shaheen
Casey	Lankford	Shelby
Collins	Leahy	Sinema
Coons	Lee	Smith
Cornyn	Loeffler	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tester
Cotton	McConnell	Thune
Crapo	McSally	Tillis
Cruz	Merkley	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wicker
Enzi	Paul	Wyden
Ernst	Perdue	Young

NAYS—8

Brown	Menendez	Udall
Gillibrand	Schumer	Van Hollen
Harris	Stabenow	

NOT VOTING—11

Booker	Johnson	Murphy
Cassidy	Kennedy	Sanders
Cramer	Klobuchar	Warren
Inhofe	Markey	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's actions.

The majority whip.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

RECESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:04 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. CAPITO).

MORNING BUSINESS—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, in the next few days, Senate Democrats will move to discharge a War Powers Resolution to tie the President's hands in defending this Nation against Iran and terrorist masterminds like Qasem Soleimani. Let's think about how we got here and the implications of this reckless action.

Qasem Soleimani has the blood of thousands of Americans on his hands and hundreds of thousands of innocent souls across the Middle East. For more than 20 years, he was the Supreme Leader's most trusted lieutenant, Iran's terror mastermind, and the man responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan by supplying the most deadly kinds of roadside bombs soldiers ever faced. He and his proxies and Iranian leaders like him are responsible for bombings of our Embassies in places like Lebanon and Kuwait. They are, in no small part, responsible for the ongoing horror of the Syrian civil war, for the civil war in Yemen. There is no doubt, based on the intelligence we have and this bloodthirsty past, that Qasem Soleimani was in Baghdad on January 2 to plot something very dangerous and very big that was going to target Americans once again.

We should all be thankful that Qasem Soleimani no longer walks the Earth, and we should be proud of the troops who executed that mission. The world is a safer place and America is a safer nation because of it. The people of Iran have been given a voice against the man who was responsible for mowing them down in protests over the years and whose death they have been out on the streets celebrating even though they risk being mowed down by their own security forces once again.

Yet, over the last 2 weeks, the Democrats have been able to do nothing but express their regret for the President's decision to eliminate Qasem Soleimani. And make no mistake—this War Powers Resolution is not about the future; it is about delivering an implicit or, if you listen to their words and don't just read the resolution, an explicit rebuke to the President for ordering the killing of Qasem Soleimani. They certainly want to prevent the President from doing anything like that in the future. That is why they have introduced this War Powers Resolution.

We should always remind ourselves when we are having a war powers debate, as we do from time to time, the War Powers Resolution is unconstitutional. It was passed by a liberal Congress in 1973 at the height of Watergate, and not a single President since then has acknowledged its constitutionality—not a single one, to include all the Democrats.

I hear a lot about the Constitution these days and reclaiming our authority to declare war and to constrain the Executive. I guess all those constitutional experts missed the Federalist Papers and their authoritative explanation of the Constitution and why we have the government we do. We have a House of Representatives with 435 people to be the institution that is most closely tied to popular opinion. We have a Senate to act as the cool and deliberate sense of community. And we have a single President—a single President—to act on behalf of the entire Nation in moments of peril.

Federalist 70, if they would just open up that authoritative explanation of the Constitution, says why there is one President, not a council of two or three or four, as some of the States had at the time of the founding. Because of the division of opinion and perspective and temperament that an executive council would have, there is one President—one President—who can act, as Federalist 70 said, with energy and dispatch and, yes, in some occasions, with secrecy. So if the Founders didn't think we should have an executive council of 3 or 4 or 5 people, imagine what they would have thought about 535 commanders in chief making operational decisions about when to take action on the battlefield.

These debates about War Powers Resolutions are really about how many lawyers and armchair rangers can dance on the head of a pin. Do you think wars and battles are won with paper resolutions? Those wars and battles are won with iron resolution. Do you think the ayatollahs are intimidated by "whereas" clauses and joint resolutions? The ayatollahs are intimidated, deterred, and scared when we incinerate their terror mastermind and we tell them that we will do it again if they harm another American.

Even if you grant the War Powers Resolution constitutional, look at the actual text of this resolution. It makes no exception for Iran developing a nuclear weapon. The ayatollahs could hold a press conference tomorrow or the Supreme Leader could tweet that they are going to rush to a nuclear breakout. The President would have to come to Congress if he would want to take any kind of action to deter it. It makes no exception for designated terrorist organizations and individuals, like the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps and its Quds Force, who have killed so many Americans and continue to target them today. It makes no exception for attacks on our allies in the Middle East, nations like Israel.