

Sadly, we lead the world in infections and death, but President Trump has decided that now is the moment in history for the United States to pull out of the World Health Organization—the same body that is heading the global pandemic response. What is he thinking—that we would walk away from the organization that has called to the table countries from around the world in an effort to find a safe and effective vaccine? Here we are, on the 40th anniversary of the World Health Organization's historic achievement in eradicating small pox, stumbling along with a President who is more interested in settling a score, casting blame, and finding ways to divide us. Once again, the majority of his party here in the Senate is not chiming in and joining us in this effort to pass this resolution.

While we continue to have some of the world's best researchers and experts, it is plausible that a vaccine will be found and developed elsewhere. In a rush to research and validate a vaccine, ramp up production, address global allocation and supply needs, ensure affordability and access worldwide, and make sure the United States gets its fair share of any safe and effective vaccine, where will we stand if the President insists on being on the sidelines, unengaged? When the United States pursues this Trump go-it-alone approach while the rest of the world is working together, where does that leave us? Pride cometh before the fall.

Just as with the smallpox effort, a global, collaborative approach makes obvious sense, and it will save American lives. Joining forces with other countries around the world will help to speed the development and eventual distribution of the coronavirus vaccine we desperately seek.

Do you want to know what one Republican Senator from Tennessee said about this? He said: "I disagree with the President's decision."

Withdrawing U.S. membership from the WHO could, among other things, interfere with clinical trials that are essential to the development of a vaccine. No one knows where this vaccine will eventually be perfected or produced. God willing, it will be soon. Yet why shouldn't we be joining in this global effort? Why? Why, at this moment in history, has President Trump said we are stepping away from the organization that leads this effort?

Given this President's—sadly, I hate to use the word—"obsession" with blaming everyone but himself for mishandling this situation, maybe his dereliction of duty should come as no surprise, but what a bitter, bitter disappointment it is.

I return to the floor to ask unanimous consent on a straightforward resolution—a simple resolution that should have passed without any fanfare by a voice vote unanimously in the Senate. This resolution calls on the United States to join in the global effort to find a safe and effective vaccine—something that we have done

consistently throughout our history until this President took office.

Ultimately, let's remember that this is a pandemic that affects the world, and any solution has to be a worldwide solution as well. We cannot isolate ourselves from the international ways of finding treatments and the development of a vaccine. Doing so not only wastes time but risks there being a loss of life.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. RES. 579

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 579, a resolution encouraging the international community to remain committed to collaboration and coordination to mitigate and prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and urging renewed United States leadership and participation in any global efforts on therapeutics and vaccine development and delivery to address COVID-19 and prevent further deaths; that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROMNEY). Is there objection?

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

First of all, let me commend my good friend from Illinois for bringing this. I know he is frustrated, as all of us are, with what has happened with this pandemic that came out of China and swept the world and caused all the grief that it has for America and for every other country on the planet.

It is important to note, I think, as we start, that the United States has been the single most generous donor of global health assistance around the world. We do hear people, from time to time, criticize the foreign assistance that America gives out. Probably the pandemic that we have just gone through, with this COVID-19 from China, is the best indication that there is for why certain foreign assistance is so crucial. This foreign assistance we give in the healthcare area is given, amongst other reasons, to keep those things from spreading to the United States.

Last year alone, we, the United States of America, we American taxpayers, provided over \$9 billion in global health assistance through the State Department and USAID. That \$9 billion does not account for the amount that the CDC spent in global health efforts. So it is well over \$9 billion that we Americans have put out there.

We strengthen health systems; we train health workers; we build supply chains; we connect health networks; we support cutting-edge research and innovation; and, yes, develop and expand access to therapeutics and vaccines, which is what my good friend from Illinois is addressing here when it comes

to vaccines. I am going to talk about that in a minute.

We led the international efforts to combat AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, polio, Ebola, and other viruses that came out of China. We are the single largest donor to the Global Fund and U.N. agencies, including UNICEF.

I hope that there isn't a suggestion that we are withdrawing from collaborative efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine because we did not directly participate in the EU pledging conference. In reality, leading partners in that effort include the Global Fund and Gavi, where we are the major donors, so we will be participating in the collaborative effort to develop vaccines for COVID-19.

I think it is also important to note that the President has made a historic—a historic 3-year pledge and is strongly supporting Gavi's COVID-19 efforts. Gavi stands for the global alliance for vaccines. It was essentially the brainchild of Bill Gates. He and Melinda, of course, in my judgment, are on an equal level with Mother Teresa for what they have done with global health. We are participating with Gavi and, like I said, the President has made a historic 3-year pledge to that.

I appreciate the feelings the good Senator from Illinois has about the President of the United States, and he did indeed put the brakes on WHO because he felt there were shortcomings with WHO when it came to WHO's work with China and their failure really to get after China at the very beginning of this to do what it really should have done.

I am going to object to this resolution not because the effort by the good Senator from Illinois isn't well-taken. It is well-taken. We had a similar one 2 weeks ago and they came out here and objected to it and the Senator is frustrated because he feels we should be doing more.

First of all, during the 2 weeks—we obviously were gone for 1 week—but let me tell you what was going on during that week and the subsequent week. I promised, at that time, that the Foreign Relations Committee was going to take this issue on because it is of such importance that we don't go through this again, and there is a lot more that we can do than simply pass a resolution.

It is my ambition to create a very significant piece of legislation that will be bipartisan, that creates a vehicle to address a fast-moving virus like this. We can all argue about the WHO and what they did or didn't do, their connections to China and that sort of thing, but that is not going to help us as we go forward. What we do know is that WHO has done good work in the past. They were a really good partner with us, as the Senator knows, when it came to implementing PEPFAR and doing great things in the battle against AIDS. They were very helpful with Ebola and very helpful with smallpox, but this was a different virus. This was

a house on fire. WHO is simply not, at this time, geared to be a fireman. When the fire bell rings, we need a vehicle to address a virus.

This is going to happen again because in the Wuhan district, there is a vast bat population, and they are carrying about 2,000 different species of virus. Unfortunately, and frighteningly, we don't know what all those viruses can do. Heaven help us if we get one out of there that is worse than COVID-19 that we have had, but we need a fire department that can address this.

I hope we are going to be able to engage China. If not, we are going to have to find ways of dealing with this. Where is that vehicle going to be carried? Is it going to be a new part of WHO? Is it going to be part of the CDC? Is it going to be a new international organization? I can't answer that, but I can tell you this. On a bipartisan basis, Senator MURPHY, who is also on the Foreign Relations Committee, and I have introduced a bill to address a number of these things, including the vaccine question and including working on getting a vehicle to do what I have described.

I think everyone is working on this in good faith. The bill that will be introduced is written on paper. It is not written on stone. We are wide open to suggestions as to what kind of a vehicle it is that will address this like firemen and not in a slower fashion like other health challenges have presented.

Senator MURPHY and I have had a number of discussions on this. We are both committed to reach the goals that I know Senator DURBIN and that I think this whole body wants to reach. We are going to hold a series of hearings as to how to do this, how best to do it, how it should be funded, how it should be organized, and how the management should take place. What it is not going to focus on is the finger-pointing for what happened after COVID escaped from a bat into a human being in Wuhan, China, and what happened after it left Wuhan, China, and went around the world. We have really good information on that already.

There is going to be a lot of other investigations and hearings and that sort of thing. We want to talk about, what do we do when this happens in the future? How can we create an agency that just like the fire department, when the bell rings, they pull their boots on; they slide down the pole; they get on the truck; and they go put out the fire.

I guarantee Senator DURBIN that we will continue to work on this. My staff tells me—and I am glad to hear that Mr. DURBIN's staff is working with them on the language on this particular resolution, and I thank the Senator for that and I invite him and commit to him that we will work with him as we develop this new legislation and as we go through the hearings.

So, again, please don't take this as combative. It is not. It is intended, in

the best spirit, to help us all move forward to get to a piece of very significant legislation that will hopefully take us forward like PEPFAR did and as some of the other monumental pieces of legislation did that can address this incredibly difficult situation and hurtful situation not only for America but for the world.

And I state to the Senator that I invite your participation, encourage your participation, and assure you that we will work in good faith to try to reach these goals.

With that, I object for the reasons stated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have respect for my colleague and thank him for his positive statement about the work to be done in the Foreign Relations Committee. There is nothing in this resolution that preempts or tries to impact on anything he mentioned. The operative language is a few words, "urging renewed United States leadership and participation in any global efforts on therapeutics and vaccine development and delivery to address COVID-19 and prevent further death."

How we do that, whether we create an agency or not, this is simply an expression of policy that I hope we can embrace. I will be back if we don't move forward with alternatives. Lives are at stake, and we should be part of the international conversation to avoid it.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, would the Senator yield for a few moments?

Mr. DURBIN. Certainly.

Mr. RISCH. Thank you. I appreciate these comments. There is nothing that the Senator just stated that I disagree with. One point, in passing, and I say this in the spirit of trying to get to the objective that I laid out, and that is, it is my intent to engage the second branch of government, not only the agencies that are responsible for this—Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, the State Department, USAID—but also the White House. The President has to have a role here. He has obviously undertaken the role. I have already spoken to him about this. I intend to have other lengthy conversations about this. I am engaging the President to assist us. This is not a partisan issue.

As Mr. DURBIN has pointed out, and rightfully so, this virus doesn't care whether you are a Republican or Democrat; it doesn't care whether you are an American or not an American. It doesn't care if you are a President of the United States or, in the case of some countries around the world, a member of the highest authority there is in that country. The virus just doesn't care.

In order for us to accomplish this, it is going to be a bill—it is not going to be a resolution—and it has to be approved by the second branch of government. They fully understand what we

are trying to do here. They have committed their resources and their input to this, and I am convinced they are working in good faith, just as everyone here is, to try to reach these goals of doing something better in the future than what we have experienced just recently.

Senator, again, thank you for your attention to this. Thank you for your input, and I commend to you that we will work together on this as we go forward.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

PROTESTS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Monday, President Trump stood in the Rose Garden and called for the use of military force against individuals who have been gathering across the country protesting racism and police brutality against Black Americans. This historic call for empowering the Commander in Chief to militarize law enforcement in our Nation pushes this President's reach for new Executive authority to the most extreme level.

This follows the President's tweets since last week, threatening to turn "vicious dogs"—his words—on protesters outside the White House and quoting the racist phrase from the 1967 Miami police chief, stating: "When the looting starts, the shooting starts," bringing to mind, sadly, for many, shameful moments in our Nation's struggle for civil rights.

President Trump said nothing to address the anguish felt by many in this country, particularly people of color, and instead called on Governors to "dominate the streets," as though the Americans, who peacefully exercise their right to protest, are an enemy force.

Initially, Defense Secretary Esper went even further when he referred to cities as a "battlespace." I am heartened by the fact that he has made it clear that he does not support the President's suggestion of militarizing the police forces and police across America. These calls by the President to militarize cities across America ignore that for far too long he urged law enforcement to "dominate," as the President often says, rather than to protect and serve, which is exactly what is contributing to the challenge we face today.

The other night, minutes before Mayor Bowser's 7 p.m. curfew came into effect, the President used law enforcement personnel to use tear gas and rubber bullets on peaceful demonstrators in LaFayette Square across the street from the White House. They even beat these peaceful demonstrators with batons and shields. There are conflicting reports as to whether the National Guard participated in the violence. I have made a direct inquiry to the Department of Defense, and they have denied it.

According to press reports, the assault began with law enforcement kneeling, not to express any solidarity