

great. But we're paying people. We have to get back to work. That's what I'm saying.

Go ahead, please.

Q: Mr. President, this is off topic. It's about the announcement from last night. It's a yes or no question, but not that we expect the answer to be yes or no.

But wasn't Michael Atkinson doing the job of the Inspector General of the intelligence community, the job he was supposed to do, when he simply took the whistleblower complaint to Congress that hadn't been taken previously? Wasn't he doing the job that he was supposed to do, that American taxpayers were paying him to do? And why did you decide to terminate—

THE PRESIDENT: I thought he did a terrible job. Absolutely terrible. He took a whistleblower report, which turned out to be a fake report—it was fake. It was totally wrong. It was about my conversation with the President of Ukraine. He took a fake report and he brought it to Congress, with an emergency. Okay? Not a big Trump fan—that, I can tell you.

Instead of saying—and we offered this to him: “No, no, we will take the conversation”—where, fortunately, we had that transcript. If we didn't have a transcript with the kind of deception and dishonesty that were practiced by the Democrats, I might not be standing here right now. Okay? Fortunately, we had a transcript and it was a perfect transcript, because even the lieutenant colonel admitted it was correct. Okay?

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. You asked a question.

So he took this whistleblower—and I keep saying, “Where's the whistleblower?” Right? “And why was the whistleblower allowed to do this?” Why was he allowed to be—you call it fraudulent or incorrect transcript.

So we offered this IG—I don't know him; I don't think I ever met him. I don't think I—he never even came in to see me. How can you do that without seeing the person? Never came in to see me. Never requested to see me. He took this terrible, inaccurate whistleblower report—right?—and he brought it to Congress.

We offered to have him see my exact conversation. It was all about the conversation, by the way. That was the whole thing, was about the conversation. Right? And then after he saw it, he must've said, “Wow,” because as I've said it many times and it drives you people crazy, it was a perfect conversation.

So instead of going and saying, “Gee, this is a terrible thing he said about the President's conversation”—well, it was a fraud. I didn't say that. And, by the way, you have the whistleblower. Where's the informer? Right?

And here's another question: Remember before I did the—before I gave the transcript—in other words, before I revealed the real conversation—where's the second whistleblower? Remember the second whistle—

Wait, wait, wait, wait. There was going to be a second whistleblower. But after I gave the conversation, he just went away. He miraculously went away.

Where's the informer? Because there was going to be this informer. Maybe Schiff was the informer. You ever think of that? He's a corrupt guy. He's a corrupt politician.

So, listen, I say this: Where's the informer? Remember, the informer was coming forward. But I gave—because, see, I did one thing that surprised everybody. This gentleman right here said, “Boy, that was a shocker.” I revealed the conversation. I got approval from Ukraine because I didn't want to do it without their approval. And they said, “Absolutely. You did nothing wrong.”

By the way, President of Ukraine, Foreign Minister said, “He did nothing wrong.” And

over that, with 196 to nothing vote by the Republicans—not one dissenting Republican vote—dishonest Democrats impeached a President of the United States. That man is a disgrace to IGs.

All right, let's go. Next. Please. He's a total disgrace.

Q: Mr. President, did you run by your decision to dismiss the Inspector General by Senator McConnell?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, we'll get off this because people want to talk about what we're talking about. But let me just tell you something: That's my decision. I have the absolute right. Even the fake news last night said, “He has the absolute right to do it.”

But ask him, “Why didn't you go and see the actual conversation?” There was no rush. He said, “Oh we'd have to rush it.” He even said it was politically biased. He actually said that. The report could have been—you know who the whistleblower is, and so do you and so does everybody in this room, and so do I. Everybody knows. But they give this whistleblower a status that he doesn't deserve. He's a fake whistleblower. And, frankly, somebody ought to sue his ass off.

Q: I just want to follow up, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: All right, it's enough with the whistleblower.

Go ahead, please.

Q: Mr. President, the governor of New York today said that he is still desperate for ventilators and that he has accepted 1,000 of them from the Chinese government. Are you concerned that states—

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what he didn't say is—okay, let me tell you what he didn't say.

Two very good friends of mine brought him those whistleblower—brought him those ventilators, right? Two very good friends of mine—they brought them. If you'd like their name, I'll give you their name.

Q: But should states and cities have to rely on—

THE PRESIDENT: No, but he—the governor didn't—

Q: —China and Russia for supplies?

THE PRESIDENT: —mention that. It came through the Chinese—the country of China. But they were given by two friends of mine, but he didn't tell you that.

Now, the governor also—

Q Who are your friends?

THE PRESIDENT: You'll see when you read the letter.

The governor also asked for 40,000—40,000. He wanted 40,000 ventilators.

Now, the governor, as you know, had a chance to get 16,000 a few years ago. He decided not to get that. The State of New York has asked for help. I've given him four hospitals, four medical centers. Then I gave him an additional hospital. Then I gave him military people to operate the hospital. They were not supposed to be COVID hospitals. The boat—the ship is not—an interesting thing happened with the ship. People aren't in accidents because there's nobody driving. There's nobody taking motorcycle rides down the West Side Highway at 100 miles an hour. People are away. So people aren't being injured.

Now they're asking whether or not we could open up the ship for COVID. We have given the governor of New York more than anybody has ever been given in a long time. I'll just say—I was going to say “in history,” but in a long time. And I think he's happy.

But I think that—because I watched what he said today, and it was fine. I wouldn't say gracious. It wasn't gracious. It was okay. I must tell you, Gavin Newsom has been gracious—Los Angeles, California, the job we've done, and all of California.

Q: But why does that matter if they're gracious or not gracious if they need the supplies?

THE PRESIDENT: It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. But I think when we've given as much as we've given to New York, somebody should say—

Nice—I'll tell you who's been very nice: Mayor de Blasio has been very nice. He understands what we've given him. We brought him some more ventilators, too, yesterday.

But nobody has been given like New York. And I think—I know he appreciates it. He just can't quite get the words out, but that's okay.

Q: So when he says—but when he says that he needs 40,000—

Q: Mr. President—

THE PRESIDENT: Please, go ahead.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in 3 weeks, America will celebrate Independence Day. For 244 years, Americans have fought, marched, voted, petitioned, legislated, published, protested, and died to defend and build our blessings of freedom. The American experiment has plenty of battle scars and growing pains handed down from one generation to the next.

The first half of 2020 shows us there are plenty of historical wounds to heal and challenges to overcome.

In the interest of public health, stay-at-home orders limited individual freedoms that many Americans take for granted, including the right to earn a living or to worship with fellow believers.

Just as the economy began to reopen, the shadows of racial injustice darkened America's doorstep. All people are created equal, but not all people are treated equally.

The unconscionable suffocation of George Floyd at the knee of a police officer in Minneapolis struck a chord of unity to end racism in America. Hundreds of thousands of people have gathered to exercise their First Amendment rights. They march to protect racial injustice and police brutality.

Unfortunately, some exploited the peaceful protests to riot, loot, vandalize, and burn. These criminal acts were not protected by the Constitution. It is obvious they weren't protected. They were antithetical to the laws of the land protecting life, liberty, and domestic tranquility.

All of this led one of my colleagues, the junior Senator from Arkansas, to submit an essay to the New York Times. In his opinion piece, he advocated why he thought the President ought to use his authority to deploy Active-Duty military forces to uphold the law and public order, as had been done by Presidents in past instances of civil unrest.

The Times op-ed pages accepted his column and published it online under the headline: “Bring in the Troops.”

Within hours, the newsroom was in a frenzy. The leftwing rallied their troops to stop the press. The New York Times, as we know, prides itself as the “paper of record.”

Since 1851, it has served as an influential platform to gather and report the news and to hold government accountable. Policemen keep the public peace. Journalists are the policemen of

our political system to keep the political system honest and open and transparent.

The New York Times opinion pages ostensibly provide a space for the free exchange of ideas and thought-filled conversation on issues of the day. I have long counted journalists as the constables of the fourth estate. They serve a very vital role in bolstering our system of checks and balances. They have a responsibility to set the tone for open dialogue.

Last week, the New York Times flunked this standard. The Gray Lady ghosted Senator COTTON's opinion piece after a meltdown in its ivory tower and when the ivory tower workforce hyperventilated.

It is certainly reasonable to disagree on the merits and to debate if recent events rise to the level of past riots that justified invoking the Insurrection Act.

I certainly think we should be hesitant to deploy our military forces domestically, even in difficult situations.

But the overheated reaction by alleged journalists even to have this debate raises the question, Do they consider themselves neutral reporters or activists for a certain world view?

Even a casual reader is able to read between the lines and know that the New York Times ascribes to a left-leaning ideology, but the mutiny in their newsroom seems to cross the line from journalism with a leftwing bias to political activism and ideological conformity.

Sadly, last week the New York Times lowered the bar of journalistic integrity. It snubbed a voice of dissent and rebuked the free exchange of ideas.

The First Amendment protects five fundamental freedoms that sets America apart as the leader of the free world: freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, and the right to petition the government.

The Constitution does so because the expression of diverse opinions is necessary to preserve liberty.

Within 4 days of publishing Senator COTTON's commentary, the New York Times caved to an ideological revolt in the newsroom.

Under mob rule, the casualty among its ranks was none other than the editorial page editor. He was forced out of his job for having the audacity to publish an opinion of a U.S. Senator.

At first, the publisher made a feeble effort to stand on principle, defending, in his words, "openness and a range of opinions." Within a few days, the publisher threw James Bennet under the bus.

It is a sad day for journalism, a sad day for the free press. These actions damage the wall dividing the newsroom and the opinion desk. They solidified their silo of leftwing thought. Canceling dissenting views is a very slippery slope. Sooner or later, it mutes the exchange of ideas in a free society.

As a student of history, I know that freedom has often been threatened by

those who are convinced their views were on the right side of history.

I offer a bit of wisdom without malice to the New York Times: Don't back down from the First Amendment. Swapping your free press for party-line propaganda and punishing dissent is not a good look. Ask the people of North Korea, China, and Iran.

On Independence Day 2020, I encourage members of the media and all Americans to step out of your comfort zones and seek to understand other viewpoints.

Before we can expand America's promise, end racism, and beat the virus, we must come together as Americans. No matter one's race, politics, creed, wealth, celebrity, remember, we are bound together by self-evident truths "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

I want even a leftwing newspaper to be a responsible policeman for our political system.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Before Senator PORTMAN and I do our unanimous consent, I just can't believe what I heard.

Senator GRASSLEY, going to the floor and talking about the media that way, when his majority—they owe their majority to Rush Limbaugh and FOX News, and they swear allegiance to a President of the United States who has lied thousands of times and then attacks the media every time they disagree with him or call him out, attacks the media as fake news, is just shocking to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

#### COMMEMORATING OTTO FREDERICK WARMBIER AND CONDEMNING THE NORTH KOREAN REGIME FOR THEIR CONTINUED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I rise to ask unanimous consent to pass S. Res. 623, which is a resolution commemorating Otto Fredrick Warmbier and condemning the North Korean regime for their continued human rights abuses.

Otto Warmbier was a native of my hometown of Cincinnati, OH. He was also a young man of great spirit, intellect, and promise.

He attended the University of Virginia, and in 2015, he flew to North Korea on a cultural trip. He went with a tour group.

At the end of his brief visit there, he was unjustly arrested by North Korean security officials at the airport, as he was departing, and he was imprisoned for 17 months on trumped-up charges relating to a political poster.

During his captivity, he was badly mistreated and was returned to the United States on June 13, 2017, only

after falling into a comatose state. He never recovered. Otto died on June 19, 2017—6 days later and 3 years ago tomorrow.

Senator BROWN from Ohio and I have introduced this resolution to remember what happened to him, to keep the memory of Otto, alive, and to hold the North Korean regime accountable for their gross mistreatment, their human rights abuses. Many others, in addition to Otto Warmbier, have been subject to those human rights abuses, including the North Korean people, whom they continue to repress, even starve and mistreat.

Our resolution calls for the United States to continue to use our voice, including at the United Nations and other forums, to speak out against the human rights abuses of the North Korean Government.

It calls for the sanctions enacted under the Otto Warmbier North Korea Nuclear Sanctions and Enforcement Act of 2019 to remain fully implemented.

Most importantly, this resolution honors and remembers Otto Warmbier, lest we forget what the North Korean dictatorship did to him.

His parents, Fred and Cindy, have channeled their grief into constructive efforts to expose the human rights abuses of the North Korean dictatorship, and I commend them for that. No parent should have to endure what they have gone through.

Jane and I plan to visit with them at their home in Cincinnati tomorrow on the third anniversary of Otto's death, and I hope to be able to hand them a copy of this resolution and to be able to say that the entire U.S. Senate voted to approve it.

This resolution is the right thing to do, and I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to pass it by unanimous consent.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Ohio.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I want to thank my friend Senator PORTMAN and the rest of my colleagues who have been steadfast in their memory and remembrance of Otto Warmbier, a young Ohioan, as Rob said, whose life was cut short by the North Korean regime's awful human rights abuses.

I take this moment to recognize—I never knew Otto, but I have gotten to know his parents and his family, and I especially thank Cindy and Fred for their advocacy in memory of their son and turning their grief into something so positive for the country and for the world.

Last year, we worked together on sanctions legislation to send a clear bipartisan signal that the United States is serious about maintaining strong economic and diplomatic pressure on North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and to stop its human rights abuses.

Those abuses took the life of Otto Warmbier. We must continue to shine a