

the situation worse, not better. North Korea—3 years after failed “negotiations,” North Korea remains belligerent, defiant, and intent on developing ICBMs. Syria—after years of sacrifice and struggle against ISIS, one impulsive decision to withdraw our troops risks undoing all our progress. Russia—every meeting the President holds with Putin always seems to result in Putin’s coming out ahead. We are now at risk of the situation with Iran heading for a similar deterioration.

The President’s foreign policy actions so far in North Korea, in Syria, in Russia, and just about everywhere else can be described in two words: “erratic” and “impulsive.” I am worried that a few months from now his Iran policy will be described in exactly the same way.

As the President’s circle of advisers has gotten smaller and more insular and as nearly all of the dissident voices have been forced out of the administration, there seems to be no one left to tell the President no. At times like this, skeptical voices need to ask the right questions, and Congress—Congress must provide a check on the President and assert our constitutional role in matters of war and peace.

In my view, President Trump does not—does not—have authority for a war with Iran. There are several important pieces of legislation by both Senators Kaine and Sanders to limit further escalation with Iran and assert Congress’s prerogative on these matters. Both should receive votes in the Senate.

I plan to ask pointed questions of this administration at a briefing for the Gang of 8 later this afternoon. We need answers to some crucial questions, and there are many. Here are the two that are most on Americans’ minds: What are Iran’s most probable responses to the strike on Soleimani? Are we prepared for each of these responses, and how effective will our counterresponses be?

There was some alarming confusion yesterday about the military’s position on the future of U.S. troops in Iraq. What, in truth, does the Soleimani strike mean for the long-term stability of Iraq and our presence there? How does the administration plan to prevent an escalation of hostilities and the potential for large-scale confrontation with Iran in the Middle East? These are just some of the questions the administration has to answer. The safety and security of our American troops and of the American people are at stake.

IMPEACHMENT

Madam President, on impeachment, this morning, I return to the most pressing question facing my colleagues at this moment: Will the Senate conduct a fair impeachment trial of the President of the United States of America?

The Framers suspected that any impeachment would ignite the passions of the public and naturally would create

partisans who are either sympathetic or inimical to the President’s interests. That is why the Framers gave the Senate the responsibility to try impeachment cases. When it came to a matter as serious as the potential removal of a President, they believed the Senate was the only body of government with enough independence to rise above partisan considerations and act with the necessary impartiality. Will we live up to that vision?

Right now, the Republican leader and I have very different ideas about what it means to conduct a fair trial. Democrats believe a fair trial considers all the relevant facts and allows for witnesses and documents. We don’t know what the evidence will say. It may exculpate the President. It may further incriminate him. We only want a trial that examines all the facts and lets the chips fall where they may.

The Republican leader, in contrast, apparently believes that a trial should feature no witnesses, no relevant documents, and proceed according to the desires of the White House, the defendant. The Republican leader seems more concerned with being able to claim he went through the constitutional motions than actually carrying out our constitutional duty.

Because the Republican leader has been completely unwilling to help get the facts for a Senate trial, the question will have to be decided by the majority of Senators in this Chamber. That means four Republican Senators at any point can compel the Senate to call the fact witnesses and subpoena the relevant documents that we know will shed additional light on the truth.

I have heard several arguments from the other side as to why we shouldn’t vote on witnesses and documents at the outset of the trial. The Republican leader and several Republican Senators have suggested that each side complete their arguments, and then we will decide on witnesses.

This idea is as backward as it sounds. Trials should be informed by witnesses and documents; they are not an afterthought. Their reasoning and McConnell’s reasoning has an “Alice in Wonderland” logic to it: Let’s have each side make their case, he says, and then vote on whether the prosecutors and defense should have all the available evidence to make those cases.

We know what is going on here. Our Republican colleagues, even Leader McConnell, knows that the American people want witnesses and documents. Sixty percent of Republicans do. They are afraid to say no, but they don’t want to vote on them because that might offend the defendant in this trial, President Trump, so they are trying to kick the can down the road.

It is a strange position for Republican colleagues to take. They are willing to kick the can down the road, as I said, on questions of witnesses and documents, but they are not willing to say when or if they will ever support it.

Just yesterday, one of the four witnesses we have requested, former Na-

tional Security Advisor Bolton, said he is ready to testify and has new information to share related to the case at hand. Republicans were dodging and twisting themselves into pretzels trying to explain why someone with direct knowledge of what the President did shouldn’t testify under oath immediately.

I believe that illustrates the fundamental weakness of the Republican position. None of our Republican colleagues can advance an argument about why this evidence shouldn’t be part of a trial from the beginning.

To put it another way, none of our Republicans have advanced an argument about why it would make sense for the Senate to wait until the end of the trial to obtain all the evidence.

Make no mistake, on the question of witnesses and documents, Republicans may run, but they can’t hide. There will be votes at the beginning on whether to call the four witnesses we have proposed and subpoena the documents we have identified. America and the eyes of history will be watching what my Republican colleagues do.

Another argument I have heard from the other side is that it is not the Senate’s job to go outside of the record established by the House impeachment probe. I would reply that it very much is the Senate’s job. The Constitution gives the Senate the sole power to try impeachment cases, not review impeachment cases, not go over impeachment cases but the sole power to try them. It is not the Senate’s job to put the House impeachment proceedings on a weeklong rerun on C-SPAN. Our job is to try the case, to hold a real, fair, and honest trial. That means examining the arguments. That means letting the prosecutors request witnesses and documents to make their case.

This is not just my view. It has been the view of every Senate facing impeachment trial in our history. Every single impeachment trial of a President has featured witnesses. Andrew Johnson’s impeachment trial had 41 witnesses. Several of my Republican colleagues here today voted for witnesses in the Clinton trial. Except for one solitary case, every impeachment trial of any official, in the history of the Senate—and there have been a bunch—had witnesses.

A trial isn’t a trial without evidence. A trial without all the facts is a farce. If the President is ultimately acquitted at the end of a sham trial, his acquittal will be meaningless. That is why the President himself should demand a full and fair trial.

President Trump, if you have nothing to hide, if you think the case is as flimsy as you say, call your Chief of Staff. Tell him to release the documents. Call Leader McConnell and tell him what you already told the country; that you would “love” for your aides to testify in a Senate trial. President Trump, if you believe you have done nothing wrong, you have nothing to be afraid of from witnesses and documents. To the

contrary, if you are afraid of witnesses and documents, most Americans will believe you have something to hide and that you fear you have done something very, very wrong.

If my Republican colleagues believe the President has done nothing wrong, they should have nothing to fear from witnesses and documents. In fact, they should welcome them. What better way to prove to the American people that we are treating this matter with the gravity it requires. What better way to prove to their constituents that they are not just doing the President's bidding and not just making this a sham trial because of obeisance to the President of the United States.

If every Senate Republican votes to prevent witnesses and documents from coming before the Senate, if every Republican Senator votes for a rigged trial that hides the truth, the American people will see that the Republican Senate is part of a large and awful coverup.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

JAPAN TRADE DEAL

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, I have come to the floor today to start this new year by really encouraging my friends on each side of the aisle to approach this coming legislative session with some optimism because there are some good things we can do.

We come to the floor and we hear about Iran and we hear about Soleimani. There are differences of opinion there. I am one of those. I represent a major military post, and I know that so many of our men and women in uniform said: You know what, this should have been done long ago. This is a known terrorist who has conducted terrorist attacks on six continents, even tried it here in the United States. They felt like the President was justified.

We hear about impeachment, and of course we know it has been widely reported that our friends across the aisle and over in the House started 3 years ago trying to find something they could impeach Donald Trump on—just something. It was going to be emoluments, or it was going to be collusion, or it was going to be coercion, or it was going to be Russia, or it was going to be bribery. There had to be something there because, you know what, they just don't like the guy. They don't like him. So they have been at it nonstop. They let that get in the way of some good things that people would like to get done.

For the next few minutes, I would like to encourage us to think beyond subpoenas and trial and negativity and witness statements and instead focus in on three things that are right in front of us: two successfully negotiated trade deals that will benefit farmers, manufacturers, and small business owners and producers not only in my State of Tennessee but across the entire country.

In the Volunteer State alone, we have 967 foreign-based businesses, and they have invested \$37.3 billion in capital improvements, and currently they employ more than 147,000 Tennesseans. That is good for our State. Trade is important to us in Tennessee, insourcing these jobs.

Of particular importance to us is maintaining great trade relations with Japan. Do you know what is so amazing? We have so many people who didn't even know that the Japan trade agreement went into effect on January 1. The mainstream media was so busy focused on impeachment and other things that they didn't even realize this was a deal that will do a good job for us.

Our former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, who is a Tennessean, Ambassador Hagerty, had negotiated this before he left. This recently agreed-to Japan trade deal will support 40,000 jobs that are already provided by Japanese companies. The new deal will also solidify Tennessee's relationships with Japanese partners like Nissan North America, Toyota, Bridgestone, Nidec, and Denso Manufacturing—all with a presence in Tennessee and all employing Tennesseans.

It is going to create greater market access to Tennessee's agriculture products, specifically pork, cheese, and wine. It will eliminate or lower tariffs on 7.2 billion dollars' worth of U.S. exports, including beef, which will put Tennessee and American farmers on a level playing field with their competitors. That is a good thing for our agricultural community. I cannot overstate how big a win this is for Tennesseans and for Americans, and there is more on the horizon.

CHINA TRADE DEAL

Madam President, later this month, President Trump will solidify a trade deal with China that will eliminate or roll back the section 301 tariffs and provide some much needed protection for our patents and trademarks and copyrights that will allow innovators in our creative community, like our Tennessee songwriters, screenwriters, TV producers, and our actors, to enjoy the benefits of a free market. This has been a long time coming. There is a lot more to do.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Madam President, you may recall at the end of 2018—not 2019 but at the end of 2018—President Trump notified Congress that he would soon provide us with implementing legislation for the newly signed United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement. We call it the USMCA.

At that moment, at the end of 2018, our colleagues in the House were put on notice that this highly anticipated and desperately needed legislation was on its way. Get ready. It is coming to you. At that moment, the House majority leadership was presented with the opportunity to prioritize American workers over partisan politicking.

What was their choice? Their choice was to choose partisan politicking and leave the American workers on the sideline, leave these auto manufacturing workers on the sideline while they focused in on partisan bickering. We all know what happened.

In 2019, petty revenge schemes took priority and trade relations with our closest allies were shoved aside to accommodate a yearslong campaign. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, for 3 years they have wanted to undo the 2016 election.

In May, instead of prioritizing the creation of nearly 176,000 jobs, House Democrats decided to spend their time drafting subpoenas. In June, instead of focusing on the 12 million jobs already depending on good trade relations with Canada and Mexico, House Democrats held four votes on these subpoenas.

It was the same story in July, in August, and in September. House Democrats pushed forward with their impeachment ambitions at all costs. They had to do it. They had made a promise that they were going to go get him. They neglected the owners of over 120,000 American small businesses that export goods throughout North America. They put themselves and their priorities before the needs of the American people.

Even as late as October, the Speaker of the House continued to stall, inventing excuse after excuse when it came to pushing the USMCA negotiations to the sidelines in favor of partisan attacks. Even Members of her own caucus sought to distance themselves from those attacks.

By the end of the year, the House majority's resolve to ignore their duty, finally began to splinter.

They struck a deal with the White House, but even then, the compromises they pushed for were barely, hardly worth wasting an entire year's worth of potential economic opportunity. There was a lot of opportunity cost to businesses to make way for House Democrats' partisan bickering.

We have brokered successful trade deals with Japan, with China—deals that America's farmers, manufacturers, producers, and small businesses have waited for, for a very long time. Now, after a year's worth of delays, excuses, and outright obstruction on the part of House Democrats, we are forced to ask those farmers and workers to wait just a little bit longer. It isn't fair, and it certainly is not what is best for our Nation's economy and certainly not what is best for Tennessee.

In the coming weeks, I encourage my colleagues to stay focused on policies that may not dominate the headlines but that are dominating the thoughts of Tennesseans from one end of the State to the other and certainly of Americans all across this country who are looking for trade opportunities and opportunities to grow their businesses in this robust and growing economy.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.