

of that: She was worried about the health consequences of such a meeting. We are canceling gatherings right and left in America because of a genuine concern we have for the well-being of one another. Chancellor Merkel's position is hardly unreasonable. It makes sense. Many of the statements and conduct from the President Trump do not.

Amidst this snub to our NATO allies, President Trump continues to try to bring President Putin and Russia into the G7, even after reports about Russian bounties being put on American soldiers in Afghanistan and the President's failure time and again since this has been disclosed to raise the issue with Vladimir Putin.

During the briefing last week, I understood there would be a distributive process for planning how these troops would be moved and when they would be moved. We would discuss the infrastructure that needs to be built in the United States as well as in Europe, and we would be in close consultation with our allies in the process.

In contrast, the Vice Chairman of the Joints Chief of Staff, General Hyten, stated yesterday that there is a planning process occurring. He also went on to say that "we'll start moving right away with forces moving right away." Really? Without the planning? It sounds like this general is snapping to the attention of the President, who is determined to poke the German Chancellor in the eye. Shouldn't our highest priority be the defense of America rather than a spite match?

If I am confused about how quickly this plan has unfolded, I will bet the rest of our NATO allies are as well.

I might also say that I received a preliminary cost estimate on how much American taxpayers will have to pay for this political adventure by President Trump. This figure is still classified. I am sorry that it is, but I can assure you the costs are substantial. Secretary Esper was dismissive yesterday of its cost; he should not be. It is substantial.

Hiding the costs of this troop realignment plan brings to mind the President's campaign promise that Mexico was going to pay for our border wall. In reality, the Department of Defense paid for a large part of it because the President diverted funds appropriated for our national defense to this Captain Queeg venture of his on our southern border.

The Defense Department should make cost estimates of this plan public today. Let the American people know what the President expects us to spend in order for him to get the last word with Angela Merkel. The American people ought to decide for themselves whether this is a cost worth bearing.

Let me tell you what has been conspicuously absent from both public and private briefings, and that is whether our commitment to our real allies in Europe and NATO is really designed to address the frontline of potential Russian aggression and provocation. I

know what that frontline is, and most people do as well—the Baltics and Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Poland—here are four countries that have the most to lose if Putin chooses a path to war. Each of them meets and exceeds the spending goals for NATO. But this plan for the reallocation and reassignment of U.S. troops does not help these four countries.

I went through the briefing. Those four countries weren't raised in the briefing. I raised them in a question afterward: Why are these countries being overlooked if we are moving troops to make Europe safer? Instead, the Department of Defense yesterday threw in as an aside a vague assurance—maybe just a possibility—that sometime, maybe in the future, more American troops might rotate through those countries for short periods of time. Major parts of the plan that I saw and part of the plan that was released yesterday actually move American troops and NATO allies further away from Russia.

Vladimir Putin is getting the last laugh again when it comes to this President. Vladimir Putin fears a united NATO. Sadly, President Trump has done everything he can to divide and diminish that NATO alliance. President Putin believes that as long as that NATO alliance is divided, he is in a stronger bargaining position. Sadly, he is right.

NATO is the most successful alliance in American history. Instead of strengthening it, the President of the United States is weakening it. Instead of leading it, he is undermining it. The best way to reassure our allies that we are with them is to scrap this plan now.

If this administration is so confident about how good an idea this is, tell the American people how much it is going to cost and explain why we are not reallocating our forces in Europe to the real frontline in Poland and the Baltics. Instead of pulling back our troops, we should be withdrawing this half-baked plan and start over anew with a focus on stopping aggression from Vladimir Putin and standing behind our traditional allies.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF DEREK KAN

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on the nomination of Derek Kan to serve as second in command at the Office of Management and Budget.

It is not every day that I stand here and endorse a nomination—a nominee—of a current President. So I don't want anybody to have a heart attack,

but I do want to stand up and say that this is a good nomination. I wish we had more like him. I am pleased that at least we have this one today to consider.

Derek Kan served previously as Under Secretary for Transportation Policy at the Department of Transportation, where he served as a principal adviser to the Secretary and provided leadership in the development of policies at the Department.

I have a couple of quotes here from two of my Democratic colleagues that referenced his time at the Department of Transportation. One of our Democratic colleagues from here in the Senate said these words: "Mr. Kan, from your time at the Department of Transportation, I know you to be a talented and thoughtful leader who can work collaboratively with Congress and others to find common ground."

Think about those words: "who can work collaboratively with Congress and others to find common ground."

Another of our Democratic colleagues said of Derek Kan: "Derek Kan is a serious, smart person and a vast improvement over the previously mentioned names."

That is a quote. I will say it again: "Derek Kan is a serious, smart person and a vast improvement over the previously mentioned names."

Now, that is not damning with faint praise. That is, I think, praise. I think it is well earned, and I just wanted to share that with you.

He has been nominated to serve by this administration in a number of positions, and he has gotten the support of Democrats and Republicans—not unanimous support. I wouldn't get unanimous support if I were nominated for something that came through here either—but he has gotten strong support, for the most part.

I was pleased to be able to vote in favor of his confirmation to this particular position. He was confirmed—at that time it was as the Department of Transportation Under Secretary, and I think he was confirmed in the Senate by a vote of 90 to 7.

Prior to this appointment, Mr. Kan served on the Amtrak board of directors, and he was unanimously confirmed to that position by this same body. He doesn't know this, but he and I have something in common. We were both confirmed—I was sitting Governor of Delaware, but I was confirmed to serve as the lone Governor at the time on Amtrak's board of directors. And I was confirmed unanimously. Somehow that slipped through. But that is something that he and I share in common, and he understands well the importance of the capacity of rail service in this country—in this century.

Mr. Kan is also experienced as a policy adviser to our current majority leader and chief economist for the Senate Republican Policy Committee. To put it bluntly, I think he possesses the necessary qualifications and experience for this position.

I have the privilege of serving as the senior Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee with the Presiding Officer, and this committee has the responsibility for vetting individuals who have been nominated to serve at the Office of Management and Budget.

During the confirmation process, I had the pleasure of speaking with Mr. Kan and getting to know him a little better and understanding better his goals for this important position. Mr. Kan clearly showed that he is intimately familiar with the issues that he would be tasked with managing at OMB, and he showed that he is willing to learn and work with others to ensure that he is doing everything he can to work productively on behalf of the American people.

In fact, Mr. Kan committed to work collaboratively with Congress to help us fulfill our oversight role. This is a shared responsibility: oversight. We all need to be interested in oversight. You don't have to serve on a committee that is focused on oversight—the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. You don't have to serve on a permanent Senate subcommittee as Senator ROB PORTMAN and I do—the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations—in order to be interested in oversight. You don't have to be elected to the U.S. Senate or to the House to be interested in oversight. This is something that we all should be interested in and all of us ought to be focused on, and we need to do it in a way that is collaborative so that we sort of marry our fortunes together and end up with the synergistic effect where the sum is greater than the parts thereof.

I was pleased with the words and the commitment he made to work collaboratively with all of us: Democrats and Republicans and our staffs. He also committed to working with the Government Accountability Office, GAO, to help them fulfill their critical oversight responsibilities.

I might add, GAO, which is our watchdog, does great work, as the Presiding Officer knows. They have been faced with an enormous undertaking, enormous challenges, with respect to the COVID-19 legislation we have passed and the need for resources to be able to do a good job in being the watchdog that we need.

I would just call on all of my colleagues to keep that in mind when we fashion the next COVID legislation and figure out how much money we need to provide for GAO to do the enormous job that is in front of them.

It is not often we get a nominee in this administration who is open to working with both sides here in the Congress and is understanding of the needs for the executive branch to be responsive to congressional oversight from this administration. In fact, Mr. Kan committed to responding to all oversight requests from the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, including requests from

Democratic Senators. He also committed to ensure that OMB responds to all requests from GAO.

I know these commitments ought to be standard operating procedure in our democracy, which is built on a system of checks and balances, but they certainly have not always been the case in this administration, especially for folks nominated to positions like the one he has been nominated for.

Mr. Kan's willingness to work with Congress and his clear qualifications to serve in this role are a welcome change in a Trump administration nominee that deserves to be recognized. For those reasons, I intend to support Derek Kan, who has been nominated for this important position at OMB. I urge my colleagues—Democrat, Republican, and an Independent or two—to do the same.

I have the privilege of serving as the senior Democrat on the Environment and Public Works Committee. In our oversight role there over the Environmental Protection Agency, we ask a lot of questions. We ask a lot of questions of that agency, the leaders of that agency.

We don't always get the responses that we need. In some cases we get the back of a hand—no response for days, weeks, months. In previous administrations, Democratic administrations where Republican Senators were maybe in the minority, they haven't always gotten the kind of response that they deserved either, but I think they have gotten better than we are getting in many cases right now when we try to get information out of EPA.

I think the sort of spirit that I sense and have observed in Derek Kan, we could use that spirit from some other folks who are serving in this administration and maybe keep him in mind when someday we have a Democratic President and a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate.

So this is a vote I think we are going to take in a very short while, and I hope, when people come here to vote, they will keep in mind some of the words I have said and some of the words I quoted from other Democratic Senators and find a way to vote yes in this case.

We will hold him up to high standards. I think if he gets confirmed—and I think he will—that it is important that he continues to demonstrate the sort of values that I have found favorable in him today.

I just want to acknowledge that it is not every day a Democrat gets to hold the gavel at a committee hearing, and yesterday Senator GRASSLEY had some other business; he had to come over and vote on the floor and take care of some other business. There was no other Republican to take the gavel and conduct the hearing, and he called on a Senator from Delaware to assume the gavel—take the gavel and pound us all the way to the finish line in yesterday's hearing.

My wife said to me last night: What was the highlight of the day? And I

said that there were many highlights of the day yesterday, but that was probably No. 1.

With that, I yield the floor to my friend from Iowa, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I do thank the Senator from Delaware for bailing me out, as we sometimes say in Iowa.

I have two reasons for speaking this morning. No. 1, very shortly, this week is the 30th year of the Americans with Disabilities Act as the law of the land. There are plenty of reasons to recognize that law for the landmark that it is and how it has helped people advance in our society and get more equality, but also, I do it because a former colleague of mine from Iowa, Senator Tom Harkin, working along with Senator Bob Dole, worked really hard to get this landmark civil rights legislation signed into law. Since that day, America has continued to improve opportunities, inclusion, and access for individuals who live with disabilities.

As my colleagues and I work to defeat the virus, heal the racial divide, lower prescription drug prices, and restore the U.S. economy, let's take a lesson from the passage of the ADA, very much a cooperative relationship between Republicans and Democrats. Let's work together in good faith and work out our differences for the good of the American people—whether it was the Americans with Disabilities Act or, now, efforts to beat the virus and get the economy going.

WHISTLEBLOWERS

Mr. President, now I speak about an issue that each day, each year, every year for I don't know how many years I have spoken on this subject, but you will soon find out why this is an important day to me, as an advocate for whistleblowing and the protection of whistleblowers.

Earlier this month, the Senate unanimously declared today National Whistleblower Appreciation Day. Every year, we honor whistleblowers on July 30, and I want to tell you the history of that.

It was on July 30, 1778—I hope you heard that right: July 30, 1778—at the height of the American Revolutionary war that the Continental Congress passed the first whistleblower law.

It did so in support of American soldiers who had decided to blow the whistle on their supervisor. That supervisor was an American naval commander. It seems this commander had not been following the rules of war and had been brutally torturing British soldiers. Knowing his actions were against the Navy's code of ethics, the soldiers decided to blow the whistle to Congress. When they did blow that whistle, they got the full whistleblower treatment, the kind that I hear too often, even today. They were sued for libel and were thrown into jail.