

place environmental justice, green jobs, and, yes, science at the heart of our Nation's climate policy.

I think Americans are saying: Welcome back, science. We are glad you are playing a role in the decisions we make and not being ignored and trampled on like the previous administration did. Understanding that the United States cannot defeat a global threat on its own, the Biden administration has already wisely joined the Paris accords and will also propose convening an international climate summit this year, on Earth Day.

These Executive actions are a very strong opening push by the Biden administration to refocus our Nation's energy toward the threat of climate change. President Biden's commitment to deal with climate change is unquestioned. He is off to a fast start, and it couldn't come soon enough.

The Federal Government has a great deal of power to set the direction for our Nation's energy and environmental policy, but climate change represents an existential threat to our country and our planet. Every tool in the toolbox should be brought to bear. In my view, President Biden should consider the declaration of a national emergency on climate change.

Former President Trump, of course, issued an emergency declaration to divert funds toward an expensive and ineffective border wall when there was no emergency at all. Declaring one for climate change—an actual emergency—would be a giant step in the right direction, and it would allow President Biden to tap additional resources and pursue additional policies in the fight against climate change, even if Republicans in Congress remain intransigent and unable to recognize the severity of this crisis.

Japan, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and scores of regional and local governments have declared states of emergency on climate change. The United States would send a powerful signal to the world about our commitment to defeating climate change if we did so as well.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on COVID, as I mentioned yesterday, the Senate will soon begin the process of considering legislation to help the country defeat COVID-19 and provide relief to those Americans who are still suffering great economic hardship.

There has been a lot of action in Washington recently. We inaugurated a new President, a new administration is getting off the ground, and an impeachment trial of the former President will commence in a few weeks. But COVID-19 hasn't gone anywhere, unfortunately. Americans are still losing their jobs. American businesses are still closing. Americans are still getting sick. Americans are still dying.

The needs in our country are still great, and the Congress must pursue a

bold and robust course of action to defeat the disease and get our country back to normal. We must not—we must not—repeat the mistakes of 2008 and 2009, when Congress was too timid and constrained in its response to the global financial crisis.

The Congressional Budget Office has told us last fall that COVID-19, the pandemic, has taken more than \$17 trillion out of our economy—\$17 trillion out of the economy. The danger of undershooting our response to COVID-19 is far greater than overshooting it. So Congress must pursue a bold response to the prevailing crisis of our time.

Here in the Senate, we want that work to be bipartisan. Let me say that again. We want the next legislative response to COVID-19 to be bipartisan. We want to work with our Republican colleagues, if we can, to include their ideas and input if they will offer them. That is our preference. But if our Republican colleagues decide to oppose the necessary, robust COVID relief that is needed, we will have to move forward without them. It is not our preference, but dealing with this crisis in a bold and sufficient way is a necessity. The Senate is going to respond to the country's needs and deliver help to the American people fast.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on impeachment, finally, I want to address the vote the Senate took yesterday on the point of order raised by the junior Senator from Kentucky. I regret to say, for 45 Republican Senators to vote for a spurious constitutional objection to the coming impeachment trial was deeply, deeply irresponsible.

The trial is still 2 weeks away. The constitutional objection has been completely debunked by more than 150 constitutional scholars representing the entire breadth of the political spectrum, including very prominent conservatives. But only five Republican Senators were willing to take a principled stand against this reckless and ill-advised effort by Members of this body who are eager to excuse President Trump's campaign to overturn the election and, apparently, to excuse his incitement of the mob that every one of us experienced in this Capitol.

I would simply say to all of my colleagues: Make no mistake. There will be a trial, and the evidence against the former President will be presented in living color for the Nation and every one of us to see once again. No one will be able to avert their gaze from what Mr. Trump said and did and the consequences of his actions. We will all watch what happened. We will listen to what happened, and then we will vote. We will pass judgment, as our solemn duty under the Constitution demands, and, in turn, we will all be judged on how we respond.

I am glad to see my colleague from Vermont here, as well as my colleague from Illinois.

Mr. LEAHY. I thank the distinguished leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, we confirmed Antony Blinken, our new Secretary of State. Like the Director of National Intelligence, the Secretary of Defense, and the Secretary of the Treasury, it was another big, bipartisan vote here in the Senate.

Four years ago, Senate Democrats subjected mainstream nominees to lead State and Treasury to a full gauntlet of partisan delay tactics. They forced cloture votes. Those were nearly party-line. So were the final votes. Neither got on the job until February. But this President's mainstream nominees to key posts are receiving fair consideration and a timely process.

Republicans have no shortage of substantive policy differences with the new administration. We will be discussing them with Secretaries Austin, Yellen, and Blinken in the course of normal committee oversight.

But unlike what took place 4 years ago, Republicans are not gratuitously delaying people who are mainstream and qualified whom the new President has asked to serve in key posts. If we find somebody unfit, unqualified, or outside the mainstream, you bet we will oppose them.

But I have just spent 4 years arguing that Presidents deserve some latitude to assemble their team. I meant it, and I mean it now.

With my vote to confirm Mr. Blinken, I wanted to reinforce the need for a true bipartisan consensus on the core objectives of our foreign policy.

Yesterday, while discussing the legislative filibuster, I talked about the chaos that would ensue if every domestic policy swung wildly back and forth with every election. The same goes for our foreign affairs. American statesmen should make commitments and issue threats that can endure beyond their terms in office.

To be clear, Presidents bear the primary responsibility for foreign policy, and I am not suggesting different leaders should not have different ideas. But they will be more successful and their legacies more enduring if they make the effort to build bipartisan support among Congress and the American people.

Neither America nor our allies will like the world that results if the world's leading Nation starts over like an Etch A Sketch every 4 years.

For starters, in several important areas, the new administration should build on bipartisan consensus that actually already exists.

Let's start with China. The Trump administration helped build a long

overdue awakening to the reality that we are in strategic competition with the PRC, that Beijing will not magically conform itself to the so-called international community, and that these challenges demand fast and serious action from the United States and from our friends. President Biden and his new Cabinet must keep working with Congress to continue building a whole-of-government, whole-of-economy approach to checking China.

We need Secretary Austin to keep focus on modernizing our forces, deterring Chinese threats from the Indo-Pacific to space and cyber space, sustaining robust defense spending, and investing in defense partnerships across the world.

We need Secretary Yellen to keep focused on the coercive manipulation the PRC uses to ensnare the developing world in its orbit.

We need Secretary Blinken to keep clarifying the China threat to our allies and European partners, to focus on contesting their growing influence in Africa and the Middle East, and to hold Beijing accountable for its unacceptable repression in places like Tibet and Hong Kong and its hostility toward Taiwan.

Now, we know China is not the only great power with whom we need to hang tough. In concrete policy terms, the United States just spent 4 years developing a more clear-eyed approach to Russia. Rather than chasing naive “resets” with the Kremlin or worshipping arms control like a religion, we leaned into military assistance to Ukraine, serious sanctions, cyber countermeasures against meddling, and other strong steps.

The Biden administration will find willing partners on Capitol Hill if it builds on this process, keeps imposing real costs on Moscow, pushes back on expansionism in the eastern Mediterranean, and, importantly, encourages our allies to join in this effort.

Great power competition is key, but, of course, it does not exhaust the threats that we face. In the Middle East, I know President Biden will face political pressure from the left to rejoin Obama’s Iran deal, just as President Trump faced pressure from the right to abandon it.

Had President Obama not tried to circumvent Congress and pursue a partisan policy, this critical national security challenge might not have become so polarizing, but that is where we are.

There is no question that Iran is the biggest threat the United States and our partners face in the region. It poses threats beyond just its pursuit of nuclear weapons: sponsoring terrorism, its sectarian agenda, its work to undermine its neighbors’ sovereignty, its development of ballistic missiles and lethal drones, and its appalling—appalling—record on human rights.

Confronting this multifaceted challenge will take bipartisanship at home and solidarity with Israel and our Arab

partners abroad. Those things need to exist before making major changes or racing to rejoin a deal.

And our new President must be ready to respond to violence with force, as the Trump administration did when they removed Soleimani from the battlefield.

Speaking of the Middle East, I have consistently and vocally stood up during administrations of both parties against withdrawing our limited forces in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria too rapidly or without a smart plan. A supermajority of the Senate joined me last Congress in warning against abruptly abandoning battlefields recklessly on bad terms.

Finally, all of this important work will require that we keep our friends close. The United States needs to be a partner that neither strains alliances unnecessarily nor hands out free passes. President Biden should continue prodding our partners to honor their promises, pay their share, and put real capabilities on the table—and reemphasize that we have their backs.

One early test for the new administration and congressional Democrats will be the defense budget. If President Biden and his team are serious about contesting China, Russia, and these other threats, they will need to show it. Without continued, robust investment in a modern global force presence, American leadership would be little more than hollow rhetoric.

I voted to get President Biden’s top foreign policy advisers on the job swiftly. I hope and expect that our shared work will lead to frequent, close, and bipartisan work with the Senate.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The majority whip.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, January 27, marks an anniversary, in a way, of an event that occurred in this Chamber 3 weeks ago, an event on January 6, which some of us will never forget.

We are in the midst of preparing for an impeachment trial of President Donald Trump for any responsibility that he bears for that day’s events. Some have said we shouldn’t do that, that we shouldn’t have an impeachment trial.

The former U.N. Ambassador and Governor of South Carolina, Nikki Haley, said in an interview on FOX tel-

evision it is time for America to get over it—get over it. She is not the only one who has expressed that point of view.

I was in the airport in Chicago last week in a waiting area to get on a plane when someone seated nearby said: Hey, Senator, get over it. Let this President ride off into the sunset. Those were his words: Get over it.

It is hard to get over it if you lived it, and many of us in this Chamber did.

Last night, there was a vote as to whether we should go forward with the impeachment. All of the Democrats, 50, voted in favor of having the trial, since we received that Article from the House. Five—five—Republicans joined us. Forty-five Republicans voted to end the impeachment proceeding, voting in favor of the point of order that was raised by the junior Senator from Kentucky.

I don’t know what was going through their minds when they joined that point of order from the Senator from Kentucky. I don’t know if it truly was a constitutional issue they were thinking about, whether it was loyalty to Donald Trump, or whether it was fear of Trump’s followers in their home States that led them to vote to end the impeachment inquiry.

But we should move forward. We should go forward, as Lincoln reminded us, because we cannot escape history, and we certainly shouldn’t be party to rewriting history.

When almost 50 percent of Trump loyalists refuse to believe that the events 3 weeks ago in this Capitol occurred or, if they occurred, that they had anything to do with President Trump, we need to make a record, a record of fact, not just for our current deliberations but for history.

How can anyone who was in this Chamber on January 6 really argue that nothing critical and important and horrific occurred?

Do you remember at 2:15, when the Secret Service went up and grabbed the Vice President by his arms and pulled him down, out that door, so they could take him to a secure place? We were stunned by that. I was.

They told us to sit here. And do you know what I saw next? Two men, plain-clothes security people—I don’t know what Agency they were working for—came right down here, right down in the middle of this well. Why do I remember that they were there? Because one of them had an automatic weapon around his neck, in the Senate Chamber.

Then we were told by a Capitol policeman who stood in front of us: Sit down. Stay in your seats. We are bringing in your staff and locking the doors. This will be a secure room. Then they closed the doors off to the public, and we sat here for a few minutes.

And then the same policeman said: Leave. Evacuate quickly, out the doors. The crowd, the mob, was advancing and getting closer to the Senate Chamber.