

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, there has been much made in the Biden administration about the value of diversity, and I agree that having diversity in any organization is positive. You get different viewpoints. But diversity encompasses much more than race or gender or religious orientation. Those are all important. Diversity actually means having people around you with varied experiences. As I mentioned, in my mind, that is certainly important, but it is particularly important in the Oval Office, particularly important in the White House. It is particularly important in the leadership of our Federal Government.

Let's take the example of military experience in this administration. You would think the Biden administration would think it is important to have members in his Cabinet or senior White House officials who have served in the military. After all, he is the Commander in Chief, a very important part of his responsibilities. But, in fact, virtually no one in this administration, with the exception of Secretary Austin, at the highest levels—Cabinet officials, senior White House officials—have any significant military experience at all.

Why does this matter? The President doesn't have it, of course. His Secretary of the VA, Chief of Staff, National Security Advisor—just go down the list. Nobody has any experience.

In the Federal Government of the United States, why does this matter? It matters because it is obvious by the people this President surrounds himself—the people who are giving him advice on big decisions for America—that this President doesn't prioritize military, our national defense, and our troops and their families. This manifests itself in many, many ways.

First, most importantly, it matters in how we fund our national defense. I was on the floor last week, speaking about this very topic. This is President Biden's first budget. You can see this here, what he proposed. It has the increases through every Federal Agency. This was a multitrillion-dollar budget. And it says this is what we are prioritizing as the Biden administration. You can see, heck, double-digits. That is Education and Commerce. And EPA is over 20 percent, and Interior over 15 percent—on and on and on, all the green. It is just a massive expansion of Federal Agencies, except two Agencies: Department of Defense and Homeland Security, the two Agencies that actually protect Americans.

If you look to this line of inflation, which when the Biden administration put out their budget last year was about 4.5 percent, these are actual inflation-adjusted real cuts by about 2 to 3 percent to our military. That was the Biden budget not prioritizing our troops, our national security at all. My view is that that is the No. 1 job of this government. It is not the President's view, not his team's view.

In the interim—that was last year's budget—we had a war in Ukraine. We

had the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense testify in front of the Armed Services Committee that we are probably seeing the most dangerous time globally in any time in the last 40 years.

So what about the Biden budget this year?

Mr. President, you did it again.

This is actually EPA, a 25-percent increase—wow.

But here we go, all the big double-digit increases. When you get down to the Department of Defense, with now the 9 percent Biden inflation, we are talking a 5-percent real cut to our military. That is not prioritizing our military.

You are starting to see how this inflation and other things are really impacting our troops. The Army, last week, in an article, suggested that the American military members who are having trouble making ends meet because of high levels of inflation should go on food stamps. You heard that correct. We are going to give the EPA a 25-percent raise. We are going to cut defense spending by a 5-percent real cut, and if you are a soldier struggling because of high inflation to actually put food on the table, you can go get food stamps. That is the perfect example of not prioritizing our military.

I want to unpack this further. The Army is saying that, if our troops don't have enough food to eat, they should look at going on food stamps. But the President finds it absolutely essential to forgive \$560 billion in student loan debt just a couple of weeks ago. Who are the preponderance of Americans who will benefit from that lawless bailout? High-earning Americans, the elite—White House staffers, certainly. They are going to get a half-trillion-dollar bailout, and our troops are being told to go on food stamps. This should shock every single American.

So we know the President and his team don't prioritize the military. Look at these budgets or our troops or our national security. But that doesn't mean they don't find the military useful. I am going to put up a picture of a recent speech that, I will tell you, every time I look at it, my blood boils, and so should every American's blood boil.

It is this picture.

Now, every President gives partisan speeches. Now, I don't think it is wise for every President to give the kind of partisan speech that President Biden gave on September 1 in Philadelphia in which he vilified millions, tens of millions of his fellow Americans who don't agree with his administration's policies. Some of you may have seen that speech. The President told the country that many of his fellow Americans, all of whom are Republican, don't "respect the Constitution," are "destroying American democracy." He gave this speech against a blood-red backdrop, fists clenched—look at him—yelling that millions of his fellow Americans embrace anger—while he embraced

anger in his speech—and chaos. This President who continually issues lawless Executive orders, like shutting down the ANWR in my State, his half-a-trillion-dollar student loan bailout, then says that Republicans are "against the rule of law." He went on and on—the insults, very partisan, somewhat deranged, attacking tens of millions of his fellow Americans.

Now, look, Presidents do that. I don't think it is a good idea. But here is the thing about this speech: To make matters worse—look at this—he did all this, a clearly partisan speech, while being flanked by two Active-Duty marines as his political props. Look at that. Look at that—in my view, a sickening abuse of authority from a Commander in Chief who has never served in the military—I think he got five Vietnam deferments—and knows nothing about the Marine Corps' ethos of honor, courage, commitment.

Remember when General Milley, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs—and was Chairman under President Trump as well—released a video where he apologized for standing beside the President, then-President Trump, when that could have been perceived as political.

This is what General Milley said:

I should not have been there. My presence in that moment and in that environment created a perception of the military [being] involved in domestic politics.

I thought that was a good speech by General Milley. He made a mistake; he apologized; and that was the right thing to do.

This is much worse. This is much worse. These marines, unlike General Milley, they are being ordered to stand next to the President of the United States while he rants against millions of his own fellow Americans.

The President certainly didn't apologize for this speech. In fact, when criticized by both Democrats and Republicans for the politicization of the military with these marines propped up next to him, the Biden administration actually doubled down in terms of their use of these two Active-Duty marines as political props in a very partisan speech.

Here is what the spokesperson at the White House said:

The presence of [the] Marines at [that] speech was intended to demonstrate the deep and abiding respect the President has for [these servicemembers] . . . [for] the ideals and the unique role our independent military plays in defending our democracy, no matter who is in power.

This is Orwellian doublespeak. What a bunch of nonsense.

Here is the fact: The presence of these marines was meant to politicize the President's speech and politically benefit from the honor and respect the few and the proud have earned in the hearts of Americans over decades, over millennium. This should disturb every single American, whether you are Democrat or Republican. This was just wrong.

Let me provide another example of the politicization of our military by

the Biden administration. Now, this is something that hasn't gotten a lot of attention. Some people were like, hey, it wasn't a really big deal. I actually think it was a big deal.

We have some of the best service academies in the world. They are the best in the world—the U.S. Naval Academy, West Point, Air Force Academy, Coast Guard Academy. Each of our military service academies has board members, some of whom are appointed by the President of the United States for 3-year terms.

Now, I am honored to serve on the U.S. Naval Academy Board. I was appointed as a member of the Armed Services Committee. Here is the tradition in our country that every single President has abided by: When they come into office, they let the Board members finish out their terms. So, for example, when President Trump was elected, the Obama administration officials, who were President Obama's appointees, finished out the terms on the Naval Academy Board, the West Point Board, and the Air Force Academy Board. That is what we do.

The point is not to politicize the service academies. That has always been the tradition, every single President—except for Joe Biden. When President Biden came into office, he looked at West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force Academy, and somebody said to him “You know what, Mr. President, let's fire all the Trump appointees. Let's fire them right now, all 18 of them” to clearly politicize the service academies of America. So that is what they did—something that had never been done before by any President in the history of the country—and they did it regardless of qualifications of the current members serving on these boards. Let me give you some examples.

Retired Army LTG H.R. McMaster was fired off the West Point Board. Ironically, the same day he was fired by President Biden's White House, he was honored by the West Point Association of Graduates as the distinguished graduate of the year of West Point. So one President fires him, and West Point gives him a great honor. GEN Jack Keane, a former Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, was fired from the West Point Board; retired Army COL Douglas Macgregor; an Afghanistan war veteran, clinical psychologist Meghan Mobbs; a Bronze Star recipient and businessman, David Urban; a retired Army lieutenant general, Guy Swan—18 qualified people, all fired.

The politicization of the service academies of America was undertaken by this administration—the first President, the first White House ever to do it, all fired by Joe Biden and not allowed to fulfill their terms.

Of course, the Biden administration loves to use our military to push other agendas that have nothing to do with lethality in winning our Nation's wars—many, many examples. Let me give you just a couple. From the begin-

ning, issuing Executive orders not focused on how we have a stronger military but using taxpayer dollars to establish a committee within the Pentagon to do what ended up being witch hunts on so-called extremists in the military, of which—when they came back with their report, they said they had actions of .005 percent. They also issued Executive orders to use taxpayer dollars to mandate transgender transition surgeries for Active-Duty soldiers. Importantly, they become nondeployable when that happens.

So back to my original point, no one in senior positions in the White House or the Cabinet—with the exception of Secretary Austin—has significant military experience, and on so many of these issues, there is no adult in the room.

Think about these White House conversations where they are talking about, hey, let's cut the defense budget, and we will grow the EPA by 25 percent. Well, that is a great idea, Mr. President. Let's make sure we give a partisan speech at Independence Hall, and, oh yeah, let's grab a couple Active-Duty marines to stand right next to the President as his props. That is a great idea, Mr. President. Let's come in and politicize the service academies and fire all the Trump administration appointees—even American heroes like H.R. McMaster, General Keane—despite the fact that no President had ever done that before. Great idea, Mr. President.

This is really problematic, what we are seeing right now, and that lack of prioritization extends here in the U.S. Senate, unfortunately, as it relates to our military.

As we know with regard to defense budget cuts, in the 2020 NDAA, we had a debate right here on the Senate floor where my colleague the junior Senator from Vermont proposed an amendment to dramatically cut our military, almost by 15 percent, across-the-board cuts. He even actually wrote an op-ed in *POLITICO*. Remember, this is when Democrats were pushing to defund the police. Here is the op-ed. It is actually called “Defund the Pentagon: The Liberal Case.”

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the *RECORD* the op-ed “Defund the Pentagon: The Liberal Case.”

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the *RECORD*, as follows:

DEFUND THE PENTAGON: THE LIBERAL CASE
(By Senator Bernie Sanders)

Fifty-three years ago Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. challenged all of us to fight against three major evils: “the evil of racism, the evil of poverty and the evil of war.” If there was ever a moment in American history when we needed to respond to Dr. King's clarion call for justice and demand a “radical revolution of values,” now is that time.

Whether it is fighting against systemic racism and police brutality, defeating the deadliest pandemic in more than a hundred years, or putting an end to the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression,

now is the time to fundamentally change our national priorities.

Sadly, instead of responding to any of these unprecedented crises, the Republican Senate is on a two-week vacation. When it comes back, its first order of business will be to pass a military spending authorization that would give the bloated Pentagon \$740 billion—an increase of more than \$100 billion since Donald Trump became president.

Let's be clear: As coronavirus infections, hospitalizations and deaths are surging to record levels in states across America, and the lifeline of unemployment benefits keeping 30 million people afloat expires at the end of the month, the Republican Senate has decided to provide more funding for the Pentagon than the next 11 nations' military budgets combined.

Under this legislation, over half of our discretionary budget would go to the Department of Defense at a time when tens of millions of Americans are food insecure and over a half-million Americans are sleeping out on the street. After adjusting for inflation, this bill would spend more money on the Pentagon than we did during the height of the Vietnam War even as up to 22 million Americans are in danger of being evicted from their homes and health workers are still forced to reuse masks, gloves and gowns.

Moreover, this extraordinary level of military spending comes at a time when the Department of Defense is the only agency of our federal government that has not been able to pass an independent audit, when defense contractors are making enormous profits while paying their CEOs outrageous compensation packages, and when the so-called War on Terror will cost some \$6 trillion.

Let us never forget what Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a former four-star general, said in 1953: “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”

What Eisenhower said was true 67 years ago, and it is true today.

If the horrific pandemic we are now experiencing has taught us anything it is that national security means a lot more than building bombs, missiles, nuclear warheads and other weapons of mass destruction. National security also means doing everything we can to improve the lives of tens of millions of people living in desperation who have been abandoned by our government decade after decade.

That is why I have introduced an amendment to the Defense Authorization Act that the Senate will be voting on during the week of July 20th, and the House will follow suit with a companion effort led by Representatives Mark Pocan (D-Wis.) and Barbara Lee (D-Calif.). Our amendment would reduce the military budget by 10 percent and use that \$74 billion in savings to invest in communities that have been ravaged by extreme poverty, mass incarceration, decades of neglect and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Under this amendment, distressed cities and towns in every state in the country would be able to use these funds to create jobs by building affordable housing, schools, childcare facilities, community health centers, public hospitals, libraries and clean drinking water facilities. These communities would also receive federal funding to hire more public school teachers, provide nutritious meals to children and parents and offer free tuition at public colleges, universities or trade schools.

This amendment gives my Senate colleagues a fundamental choice to make. They can vote to spend more money on endless wars in the Middle East while failing to provide economic security to millions of people

in the United States. Or they can vote to spend less money on nuclear weapons and cost overruns, and more to rebuild struggling communities in their home states.

In Dr. King's 1967 speech, he warned that "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

He was right. At a time when half of our people are struggling paycheck to paycheck, when over 40 million Americans are living in poverty, and when 87 million lack health insurance or are underinsured, we are approaching spiritual death.

At a time when we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major country on Earth, and when millions of Americans are in danger of going hungry, we are approaching spiritual death.

At a time when we have no national testing program, no adequate production of protective gear and no commitment to a free vaccine, while remaining the only major country where infections spiral out of control, we are approaching spiritual death.

At a time when over 60,000 Americans die each year because they can't afford to get to a doctor on time, and one out of five Americans can't afford the prescription drugs their doctors prescribe, we are approaching spiritual death.

Now, at this unprecedented moment in American history, it is time to rethink what we value as a society and to fundamentally transform our national priorities. Cutting the military budget by 10 percent and investing that money in human needs is a modest way to begin that process. Let's get it done.

Mr. SULLIVAN. So that was the liberal case, defund the Pentagon. The junior Senator from Vermont wrote that. The majority leader put out a tweet saying he was a proud supporter of the defund the Pentagon amendment. That was right here on the Senate floor.

Of course, there is the National Defense Authorization Act, the No. 1 bill that focuses on national defense for our Nation. That passed out of committee, the Armed Services Committee, in June in a very strong bipartisan vote, 23 to 3. It passed the House in July. We will have pay raises for our troops so the Army doesn't have to tell them go line up for food stamps because they are hungry. And we need to bring it to the floor right here.

So what are we doing? As far as I can tell, the majority leader doesn't want to bring up the Defense Authorization Act until December—December. That is why I joined a letter led by Senator TUBERVILLE, with whom I serve on the Armed Services Committee, signed by 20 of my colleagues, to say to the majority leader: Mr. Majority Leader, we have a dangerous world right now. Bring the NDAA to the floor. It is going to pass. It has great support.

By the way, I know the Democrat Senators feel this way, too, on this topic.

So we need to get this body back to what is important for our country—bolstering our economy, fighting inflation, bringing down energy costs, unleashing American energy, and definitely passing the legislation that funds our military, that provides pay raises for our troops during this very dangerous time.

So I again ask the majority leader to bring the NDAA to the floor. We need it.

I call on the President and his administration—the President of the United States, the Commander in Chief—to truly prioritize our military and their families, and that begins with putting an end to using them in a disgraceful way as political props for your partisan agenda.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The Senator from Kansas.

ADVANCED AIR MOBILITY COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, American aviation—something we care about greatly in Kansas but across the country—it is entering a new era of innovation and of growth. Industry and government in this circumstance need to work together to make certain the United States stays competitive and remains the leader in this arena.

In today's technology and research and development, there are unmanned vehicles. They are autonomous. They will be flying passengers and cargo from point to point in the United States.

These vehicles will take off vertically and land vertically, and it is important for us to begin the preparation for that development in our airspace, at our airports, in our communities, and across the country.

Bipartisan legislation, which I have introduced along with Senator SINEMA, the Advanced Air Mobility Coordination and Leadership Act, has been waiting Senate approval for weeks.

This legislation would instruct the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation to lead a working group comprised of members of various government Agencies and the civil aviation industry—a public-private effort.

Their objective would be for them to review the steps needed to mature AAM past its initial operations, ensure a robust domestic supply chain, identify current Federal policies that can be leveraged to advance this industry.

I thank Senator SINEMA for her help in moving this bill forward. It has been approved by the Commerce Committee, and the advocacy groups have been engaged in helping us develop the legislation and helping us work its way through the committee and through the Senate.

I also thank a number of Kansans who have provided information and support for this endeavor.

This legislation is crucial to ensuring the United States remains a leader in the aviation sector for years to come, and I am anxious for it to become law with the President's signature.

Therefore, as if in legislative session, I ask the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany S. 516.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair lays before the Senate the following message from the House.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the bill from the Senate (S. 516) entitled "An Act to plan for and coordinate efforts to integrate advanced air mobility aircraft into the national airspace system, and for other purposes" do pass with an amendment.

MOTION TO CONCUR

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, now I move to concur in the House amendment, and I ask unanimous consent that the motion be agreed to and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The motion was agreed to.

AMENDMENT TO MONTREAL PROTOCOL ("KIGALI AMENDMENT")—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today to remind our colleagues of the incredible opportunity that we have before us today—incredible opportunity that we have before us today.

Later today, this body, the U.S. Senate, will have the opportunity to vote to ratify the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

What does that mean?

Kigali, as it is affectionately known, is a global treaty to phase down the use of hydrofluorocarbons, also known as HFCs. For years, HFCs have been widely used as a key component that are called refrigerants, but a key component in modern air conditioners, in refrigerators, and other cooling products. Yet, the United States is already transitioning away from using HFCs. We might want to ask, why?

Well, one reason is that American companies are at the forefront of developing the next generation of coolant technology, the next generation of refrigerants.

This transition away from HFCs is expected to stimulate literally billions of dollars in economic investment in this country—billions of dollars; create tens of thousands of jobs; and significantly increase U.S. exports, all using technology developed in this country—all by using technology developed in this country; putting Americans to work, using technologies developed by Americans.

Now, first, some history on how we got here.

HFCs came about to replace ozone-depleting substances, which created a hole in our ozone layer. I said to some of my colleagues yesterday at a luncheon where we were, Mr. President, that I first remember hearing about the hole in the ozone, I think, when I was in the Navy overseas, and reading about it in Time and Newsweek that I got in the mail while we were deployed and saying: I wonder what this is all about. What could be causing that? It turned out to be a big deal and one that still plays out today in the debate before us as well.