

The truth is, the CCP has systematically worn down human rights and democracy in Hong Kong and jailed Hongkongers for speaking up.

The truth is, the CCP is an aggressive, irresponsible presence in the Pacific region and well beyond.

America's national security and economic competition with the CCP is a defining challenge for our country—and not just us but for all our friends and partners around the world, anyone who values an international order built on freedom and self-determination instead of their opposites.

Last year, the Senate took some bipartisan steps to strengthen America's hand in that competition. The bipartisan U.S. Innovation and Competition Act was not any Senator's or any committee's or either party's idea of a perfect bill, but this delicate compromise product made headway on issues from critical supply chains to counter-espionage, to intellectual property. And the Senate passed the bill last June, and the House has done nothing for 8 months—nothing from House Democrats from last June until just last week.

So a few days ago, instead of passing the Senate's careful compromise, House Democrats slapped together a partisan bill stuffed with poison pills and the kinds of things they tried to put in their reckless tax-and-spending spree that failed at the end of last year. They didn't even bother to try working with House Republicans. The whole exercise was completely unserious.

House Democrats' version mentions the word "climate" nearly as many times as it mentions the word "China." It pours billions into the U.N. Green Climate Fund so the United States can borrow money from China to give it to an international body, which can then give it to China.

Their bill even goes out of its way to include provisions on—listen to this—marijuana banking.

China has been steadily building up its military and economic might, and the Democrats' answer is to help Americans get high?

Drug overdoses on fentanyl just became the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45 across our entire country. Much of this poison pours into our country from, of course, China. And Democrats' plan to combat this is some more marijuana on the side?

Needless to say, this is not a winning strategy for a global competition between great powers.

So here is the bottom line. The bipartisan Senate USICA bill was itself a delicate compromise product. Any Democrats hoping to yank the bill to the far left or insert poison pills are badly, badly mistaken.

GERMAN CHANCELLOR OLAF SCHOLZ VISIT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, today President

Biden will welcome Olaf Scholz, the new German Chancellor, to his first visit to Washington since taking office.

Germany is a crucial ally of the United States. Tens of thousands of U.S. servicemembers reside in Germany, contributing to the collective security of the NATO alliance. According to the State Department, bilateral trade between our countries totaled more than \$260 billion in 2019.

Many in Washington on both sides of the aisle appreciated the increasing leadership role that Chancellor Scholz's predecessor, Angela Merkel, played in international affairs. Germany's overseas contributions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa demonstrated a growing willingness to contribute to international missions that advance our collective security interests.

The German people have built the largest economy in Europe and the fourth largest in the entire world. They are indeed a major player, but there is no question Germany could do more given its influential role, including within the EU and NATO, to advance our shared foreign policy and security interests.

Back during the Cold War, the West German military was truly a capable fighting force, but Germany's military has been allowed to atrophy in the decades since. Today, it lags behind the state of the art and suffers from shortfalls in readiness and regular maintenance.

Germany endorsed the 2014 NATO pledge to commit 2 percent of its GDP to defense and 20 percent of that defense spending toward modernization by 2024. But it has taken very few credible steps to meet that pledge.

Meanwhile, threats to the alliance have only grown since 2014. Russia's and China's decades-long modernization efforts made it clear that 2 percent will not suffice for NATO to meet these growing challenges.

Here in Congress, we have demonstrated our commitment to NATO and to Europe's security. We hosted Jens Stoltenberg for a joint address to Congress 3 years ago. We have included measures supporting America's presence in Europe in our annual Defense bills, including significant investments in our European Deterrence Initiative.

So I hope that Chancellor Scholz will reciprocate and take this opportunity to reassure us about Germany's commitment to NATO and our collective defense. Our friends are too powerful and too prosperous not to contribute more militarily to our alliance.

Of course, building military capabilities takes time. But the urgent issue of Russian aggression in Europe also demands courage and firmness, and it demands it right now. We know how such resolve works. The United States and our allies displayed such firmness again and again in standing up to Soviet pressure, and West Berlin remained a free city because of it.

Chancellor Scholz has plenty of tools at his disposal to join his allies in send-

ing a strong signal to Putin that aggression against Ukraine would carry a tremendous—tremendous—cost.

So let's take one example. A bipartisan chorus in Congress has opposed the Nord Stream 2 Pipeline for years. We have viewed it as a new geopolitical tool for Putin to undermine Ukraine and divide Europe. Germany acknowledges the international community's concerns, hence German delays in moving the project forward.

It would be a powerful demonstration of German leadership for Chancellor Scholz to declare firmly and simply that Russian escalation in Europe will result in the termination—the termination—of Nord Stream 2—not another pause, the end of the pipeline, period.

Likewise, it would send an important message if Chancellor Scholz commits, like other NATO allies have done and like his own predecessor's national security advisor just recommended, that Germany will help Ukraine with legitimate military capabilities so that it can better defend itself against aggression.

So, in conclusion, Germany has been an important pillar in NATO and a strong ally of the United States literally for decades. We welcome the new Chancellor to American soil. The time is now—now—for Germany to stand up and protect the peace and defend the stable Europe that modern Germany itself has helped construct and from which it has greatly benefited.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Illinois.

JANUARY 6

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, if you have any memory of the Soviet Union, you can remember that when Moscow was in its ascendancy in that region of the world, their plan included a revision of history. They rewrote chapters of history to make themselves look stronger and better and smarter and more powerful than they ever were.

And we used to mock that in the West and say: Don't they know that history speaks for itself? The facts speak for themselves. They did it time and again.

It was usually the product of authoritarian rule, where one man—strongman—would want his version of history to be written in the books and taught to the children.

Last week, we saw an exercise in Soviet revisionism in, of all places, Salt Lake City, UT. The Republican National Committee met in Salt Lake City, UT, for a national conference, and representatives came from all over the United States.

What they did to start that conference off was to censure two Republican House Members, LIZ CHENEY and ADAM KINZINGER from Illinois. To me, it was the lowest of low tactics to attack these two individuals who are making a bipartisan effort with the January 6, 2021, House committee to

get to the bottom of what happened that day and who was responsible for it.

You might remember that there was a proposal from Speaker PELOSI that we create a bipartisan Commission wherein the House and Senate Democrats and Republicans would turn this matter over, as we have before to a group, to determine what happened that day and what was behind it to avoid its ever happening again and to get one clear definition for history from this bipartisan Commission.

The Commission idea was stopped by Senator McCONNELL, the Republican leader in the Senate. He refused to agree on this bipartisan approach. So Speaker PELOSI, realizing she had a scant majority in the House, said that she was going to still try to put such an investigation together. She invited Republican participation, which didn't work out well. Eventually, two stepped forward—Congresswoman CHENEY and Congressman KINZINGER—and said they would participate.

I know ADAM KINZINGER. He is from my State. We have worked on a few things together. I respect him for his political courage time and again to speak out as he has. I am sorry that he was the subject of that censure.

Sadly, that was not the only mistake made in the Salt Lake City Republican revisionary meeting. What was even worse, if anything could be worse, was the declaration by the Republican National Committee that what happened in this building—in this room—on January 6, 2021, was somehow characterized by a unanimous vote as legitimate political discourse.

The Acting President pro tempore remembers that day, and I do, too. I can't forget it. It was when Vice President Pence was sitting where you are today, and a few minutes after 2 o'clock, the Secret Service came in and whisked him off the platform. We were told there was an attack on the Capitol taking place.

Earlier, there had been a rally, sponsored by President Trump, and he had incited this insurrectionist mob to come up to the Capitol to be heard and seen. They knew why that day was chosen. January 6 was the day we were counting the electoral college vote—the official vote on the selection of Joseph Biden as President of the United States. It was the intention of President Trump and those who came here to interrupt that constitutional process.

It is interesting as well that last week, Vice President Pence, at a Federalist Society meeting, spoke out on the subject and said for the first time that I can recall since he was chosen as Vice President that, in fact, President Trump was wrong—wrong in believing that he had the power as Vice President to change the electoral college vote. Pence made it clear that he did not have that authority.

Well, the Republican National Committee went further in trying to pro-

mote the Big Lie and called what happened on January 6 in this Capitol Building legitimate political discourse.

Do they honestly believe that breaking down the windows and doors of this building to enter as an unruly mob is legitimate political discourse?

Do they believe that spraying toxic bear spray in the faces of our policemen is legitimate political discourse?

Do they believe that 140 injured policemen and 5 people who are deceased as a result of that mob action was somehow legitimate political discourse and that, as they came into the Chamber—these demonstrators who were aping themselves in front of cameras for their friends to take pictures—sitting in the chair where the Acting President pro tempore is sitting today and going through my desk and other desks here to see if there was anything they could take a picture of or steal—that that was legitimate political discourse?

Do they believe that incitement to violence by President Trump to send this mob up here was legitimate political discourse?

Shame on the Grand Old Party. Shame on Mr. Lincoln's party. They should know better. I am glad that a handful have stood up and spoken up. I wish more would.

If we are ever going to put an end to Trumpism in this country and in the Republican Party, only the Republicans can get it done. They have to decide that enough is enough and step forward.

It is interesting to me that, when Senator McCONNELL came to the floor a few minutes ago, he talked about the statement of some Big Ten professor—he didn't name his name—who was not respectful of our police. Of all of the things that happened in the last week that were not respectful of the police, I would certainly add the Salt Lake City Republican national meeting, where the attack on our police was characterized as legitimate political discourse. An incitement to violence was legitimate political discourse.

America is better than that. I sincerely hope that real leaders within the Republican Party will reclaim their party and put an end to this madness that Trumpism has brought them.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on an entirely different subject, on March 26, 2020, America passed a grim milestone when 1,000 Americans died that day of COVID—front page news. Two months later, after Memorial Day, we passed another terrible milestone when 100,000 had died of COVID. As many Americans had died from COVID as from the Korean, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan wars combined. By this past September, the number of Americans who had been lost to COVID hit 695,000—memorialized in a heart-breaking sea of small, white flags that covered our National Mall. This week-

end, the United States hit another staggering milestone—900,000 Americans dead from COVID. In Illinois, there have been 31,000 lives lost.

COVID-19 is now the third leading cause of death in the United States, behind only heart disease and cancer. At the rate we are going, experts say it is likely the United States will reach 1 million COVID deaths in just a few weeks.

What makes these numbers even more tragic is that so many of the deaths could have been prevented. COVID vaccines are safe and free and highly effective at preventing COVID hospitalization and death. Think about this: According to new data from the CDC, unvaccinated individuals are 97 times more likely to die of COVID compared to those who have been vaccinated and boosted—97 times more likely to die if you are unvaccinated.

Just last night, I watched "60 Minutes." There was a presentation by nurses in Louisville, KY, the home State of the Republican leader. They talked about the devastating toll on their emotions and even their physical bodies when it comes to the deaths that they have to witness every day. They are beaten down, these nurses. They say that some 25 percent, if I remember correctly, have already resigned and have said they can't take it anymore. And to think how many of those hospitalizations could have been avoided if vaccinations had become universal across this country as they should be.

Well, this evening, Members of Congress will gather on the steps of the Capitol for a moment of silence to remember the 900,000 souls we have lost to this virus. May their families and loved ones find peace.

We have the tools and knowledge to bring this pandemic under control if only we would use them.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there was another set of numbers that was released last Friday that testifies to good news, and America needs it. It testifies to the resilience of the American people and the American spirit.

Many economists had braced for a disastrous January jobs report. The most optimistic among them predicted that the U.S. economy might grow by 150,000 or maybe 250,000 jobs last month. Some warned that it could show massive job losses. Here is what we learned:

Despite the Omicron surge and the global supply chain shortages, U.S. employers added 467,000 new jobs last month—467,000. On top of that, the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows us the economy added 700,000 more jobs in November and December than we initially calculated. All told, the U.S. economy has added 6.6 million jobs in the last year—the strongest first-year job gain of any President in history.

When Joe Biden took over the office a little over a year ago, he inherited