

omnibus. Over the weekend, appropriators held positive and productive conversations, enough that both sides are moving forward in good faith to reach a deal, even if it is not going to be everything both sides want.

Later this week, Members should be prepared to take quick action on a CR, a 1-week CR, so we can give appropriators more time to finish a full funding bill before the holidays.

I am optimistic we could take action on a CR rather quickly and avoid the shutdown that neither side wants—and that is a 1-week CR. The benefits of an omnibus are as many as the number of citizens in America.

All of us are better off when the government is fully equipped to provide vital services millions rely on. One group who very much needs an omnibus are our veterans.

Last week, the VA wrote Congress a letter warning that a CR would mean a \$10 billion shortfall for the VA. That means fewer healthcare workers on the job, it would mean a surge in the backlog of claims, and, God forbid, it would throw a wrench in the VA's plan to implement something that we are also proud that we passed on a bipartisan basis this summer: the PACT Act.

There is no reason we need to go down this road. The brave Americans who have served our country in uniform should never have to suffer the consequences of failing to fund the government; but, unfortunately, that is the risk they face as of right now if we don't finish the job.

So to all my colleagues, let's continue negotiations in good faith. Both sides are going to have to give in order to get it done, but it will be worth it if it means doing right by our veterans, our servicemembers in uniforms, our kids, their families. That is what is at stake here in this process to fund the government.

ANTI-SEMITISM

Madam President, finally, on anti-Semitism, earlier today I had the honor of addressing a gathering organized by the Orthodox Union in New York, to address the dangers—serious dangers—of rising anti-Semitism. Over the past two months, American Jews have watched in horror as numerous public figures, from entertainers all the way to former President Trump, have fanned the flames of anti-Semitism through their words and conduct.

It is a sad reminder that after decades of hard-won progress, unfortunately, sadly, anti-Semitism is on a resurgence here in America. We see anti-Semitism not only through slurs and graffiti and threats, all of which are abhorrent and unacceptable, but also physical violence against our Jewish brothers and sisters, sometimes tragically deadly—Poway, Jersey City, Monsey, Pittsburgh. And not to mention the weekly attacks against synagogues and schools and Jewish communities that never reach the spotlight. All American Jews know and remember these names. They are seared in

our memories. And unless we can come together as a community and as a country to address this crisis, I fear we will soon have to add more names to the list.

Of course, I have personal experience about this kind of anti-Semitism in terms of my family. My great-grandparents lived in a place in western Ukraine. They had 18 children, believing devoutly in the Bible and God's first command to man, which was "be fruitful and multiply."

My grandfather was one of three of those 18 who came to America, but the other 15 stayed there. And when the Nazis came into western Ukraine, they told my great-grandmother—her husband had been a well-known Jewish scholar and had passed away—and they told my great-grandmother to gather her larger family on the porch. Thirty-five people gathered on the porch from ages 85 to 4 months. The Nazis said: Come with us. She was a tough lady, she said: We are not moving. And they machine-gunned every one of them down.

These are the stakes. When the former President of the United States welcomes, at his own dinner table, several vicious anti-Semites, and then rather than apologize, he lectures American Jewish leaders for insufficient loyalty, it is incumbent on all of us to speak out.

I am proud of many Jewish organizations that did speak out, some of them former strong allies of the former President. It has made a big difference. Now, of course, America's roots of democracy are far deeper than those that existed in Europe. But the lesson of history is we must speak out against bigotry of all types or it grows. Its evil seed grows.

I shudder—I shudder—to think of what it would mean for the safety of our children, their children, and their children after that if the ideology elevated by the former President were to continue to seep into our society like a poison. Every single one of us, without exception, has an obligation to call out the poison of anti-Semitism and all other bigotries wherever they arise.

To tolerate them and let them grow risks horrors that we have seen in the past around the globe and we don't want to see in the future.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

NDAA

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, the Senate gavels in today with our annual defense bill still unpassed, with less than 1 week remaining of government funding, and less than 2 weeks left until our hard stop for the holidays on December 23. That is the bad news. But the good news is that both sides have a clear understanding of what it takes to finish our work on a bipartisan basis.

First, Senators INHOFE and REED and their House counterparts have passed

out a strong bipartisan National Defense Authorization Act. The Senate should turn to it as soon as possible.

But, of course, Congress authorizing the tools, training, and equipment that our Armed Forces need will accomplish very little if we fail to then provide the actual funding.

Both sides know what it would take for the Senate to pass a full-year government funding bill into law. There is no mystery here. A funding agreement would need to fully fund our national defense at the level written into the NDAA without—without—lavishing extra funding beyond what President Biden even requested onto Democrats' partisan domestic priorities. In other words, do not go beyond what the President asked for earlier this year on the domestic side.

Our Democratic colleagues have already spent 2 years massively—massively—increasing domestic spending, using party-line reconciliation bills outside the normal appropriations process.

So, clearly, our colleagues cannot now demand even more—more—domestic spending than President Biden even requested in exchange for funding the U.S. military. Funding our national defense is a basic governing duty.

The Commander in Chief's own party does not get to demand a pile of unrelated goodies in exchange for doing their job and funding our Armed Forces.

If House and Senate Democratic colleagues can accept these realities in the very near future, we may still have a shot at assembling a full-year funding bill that will give our military commanders the certainty they need to invest, plan, and stay competitive with rivals like China.

If our Democratic colleagues can't accept those realities, the option will be a short-term, bipartisan funding bill into early next year.

YEMEN

Madam President, now on a related matter, events from Europe to Asia, to the Middle East continue to demonstrate on a daily basis why American global strength and leadership are essential for protecting our homeland, our core interests, and our allies and partners.

But, unfortunately, Senator SANDERS from Vermont has drafted a resolution that would pull America back from global leadership in a clumsy and deeply counterproductive way.

Our colleague has prepared a resolution attempting to further limit America's support for the U.N.-recognized Government in Yemen and the Saudi-led coalition helping defend it against Iranian-backed Houthi terrorists.

I welcome debate about American policy toward Iran, and that is what this resolution is really about—not Yemen, but Tehran.

There is no question about Tehran's role in the fighting in Yemen from the very beginning. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is intimately involved.

Less than 1 month ago, the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard stopped a wooden sailing vessel heading from Iran to Yemen and found 70–70–tons of missile fuel component that Iran was trying to sneak to the terrorist rebels—this, on top of countless small arms, UAVs, and rockets that Iran has provided to support Houthi terror.

Iran has long seen the fight in Yemen as a way to expand its influence and tighten its grip on regional power. There is little question that an Iran-backed Houthi victory over the U.N.-recognized Government of Yemen would be bad news for American interests in the region and the interests of our close partners.

Iran and their Houthi partners want a platform to launch indiscriminate terrorist attacks against civilian cities in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and against ships belonging to Israel and other internationally flagged vessels.

The Iranians will continue to use Yemen as a testing site for the same kinds of weapons that Iran has long used to target and kill American forces in Iraq and Syria—the same kinds of weapons Iran is now also providing to Russia to rain death and destruction on Ukraine.

This is just about the worst imaginable time the U.S. Congress could go out of our way to alleviate the pressure that Tehran and its Houthi proxies are feeling.

A fragile cease-fire in Yemen is on the line. Why send a signal that we are backing away from our partners? Why emboldened the Houthis at this juncture?

Just as the Iranian people themselves are fed up and have been fighting back against their country's oppressive regime, Senator SANDERS wants to cut Tehran a huge break?

If the United States inflicts this kind of self-inflicted wound on our Middle East strategy; Iran will celebrate; Russia will pop champagne; China will enjoy more oxygen to expand its own creeping regional influence as well; and America's allies and partners will be left questioning our resolve, our partnership, and wondering if it wouldn't be a safer bet to turn toward Beijing instead.

Yemen is also home to the wing of al-Qaida that poses the greatest threat to the United States. Don't take my word for it. President Biden's Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, has publicly warned about the threat from AQAP in Yemen.

We rely on the U.N.-recognized Government in Yemen, as well as key partners in the region like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to keep pressure on al-Qaida on multiple fronts.

Do we really want to send a signal to partners on whom we can rely that they cannot rely on us?

I have been critical of the Biden administration's mistakes in the Middle East and its passivity in the face of Iranian aggression, but even this administration strongly—strongly—opposes Senator SANDERS' resolution.

The Senate has enough crucial business to tackle this week without going out of our way to make life better—better—for our enemies and harder for our partners.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today to speak about the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, about to come before us.

First, let me say this bill is aptly named in recognition of nearly three decades of service in the Senate of our colleague Senator JIM INHOFE of Oklahoma. I count him as a friend, and I wish him the very best in his future endeavors.

I am grateful to him, Chairman JACK REED from Rhode Island, and their staff for working to produce this bill.

This is the 62nd year that Congress has reached a bipartisan, bicameral agreement to produce this Defense authorization bill. It is about the only thing which you can count on with regularity every year, and I commend Senator REED and Senator INHOFE for maintaining that tradition and maintaining our commitment to the men and women in uniform and the defense of the United States.

This fiscal year 2023 Defense authorization bill has a top line of nearly \$858 billion for defense and a deserved 4.6-percent pay raise for our troops—that is the largest increase in 20 years—to help military families deal with inflation.

The bill also supports employment opportunities for military spouses, their kids, and improved military housing and childcare.

It ensures that the United States can defend effectively against threats from China, North Korea, or any other nation foolish enough to challenge.

And it boosts military aid to Ukraine, which is at the frontline of democracy, as defense against the Russian thug's brutal and illegal war.

The bill invests important and innovative capabilities and technologies to improve the safety of military tactical vehicles and discover PFAS-free alternatives to firefighting.

And it includes several provisions that I requested with Senator DUCKWORTH, from protecting Scott Air Force Base—one of our premier Air Force bases—from divestment to strengthening security cooperation with our Baltic allies, to expanding Federal mental health services after FEMA emergency declarations.

I am pleased the bill also includes bipartisan provisions from the Judiciary Committee to improve the security of

Federal judges and strengthen protection for sexual assault survivors.

You wonder, What is that doing in this bill?

This bill is the vehicle for many good things to happen, and the bills that I have just referenced were bipartisan bills coming out of committee which we have hitched a ride on this bill to deliver.

At the same time, I am troubled by several provisions in the text of the bill.

First, this bill would lift the Pentagon's policy of requiring servicemembers in the military to receive COVID-19 vaccines. This is an extremely alarming and even dangerous decision.

Mandatory vaccinations for the U.S. military are not new. They date back to the earliest days before we were a nation, when George Washington ordered small pox inoculations for troops in the Continental Army.

The Pentagon currently requires several vaccines for military members, and appropriate exemptions already exist for medical and religious purposes.

So many troops serve around the world in extreme conditions and in close quarters for extended periods of time by assignment, making any risk of infectious disease such as COVID all the more threatening and troubling.

And the lingering damage of long COVID—and don't discount it. There are Members of the Senate who are privately and quietly battling with this issue—including respiratory, heart, neurological, and autoimmune conditions. This underscores the importance of our servicemembers being vaccinated.

Thankfully—thankfully—more than 97 percent of all Department of Defense employees have been fully vaccinated, and more than 99 percent of Active-Duty servicemembers have had at least one dose.

But the repeal of this mandate at the insistence of Republican Members of the House is a dangerous, disturbing insertion of politics into an important public health and national security matter.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, whom I greatly respect, has made it clear that he opposes this provision, as do I.

In addition, the final bill extends for another year unnecessary restrictions on transferring detainees from the detention facility at Guantanamo. Did you think Guantanamo was gone and closed? No, it isn't.

Included in this bill is a complete ban of transfer of any of these detainees to the mainland of the United States for any purpose whatsoever for any period of time.

This ban includes even transfers to the United States for prosecution in a Federal court or necessary medical care.

This puts our medical professionals in a terrible, untenable, unprofessional position of having to provide medical