

emissions for the better part of a decade.

Unsurprisingly, our former colleague failed to secure a meeting with President Xi or his foreign minister. Perhaps, as I have discussed before, the CCP had already made that latter official disappear.

China is America's single greatest strategic adversary. The PRC is not inclined to do America or the West any favors. And political relations with Beijing have declined not because of insufficient economic ties but because of China's concerted efforts to intimidate its neighbors, spy on our communications, steal our technology, and undermine global free markets.

The sooner the Biden Administration accepts that reality, the sooner the United States can engage more deeply with allies and partners who share our interests in preserving the peace.

Russia's escalation against Ukraine has taught allies in Europe a valuable lesson about the dangers of economic overreliance. Views are changing across Europe as our allies take a new look at the nature of the dictatorship in Beijing and its friendship without limits with Moscow. The German foreign minister, for example, has publicly warned against replacing dependence on Russian gas with new economic dependence on the PRC.

Asian allies have long been concerned with the PRC's growing assertiveness. They understand that Russia is a Pacific nation with significant air and naval presence in the Far East.

Americans who focus single-mindedly on the Indo-Pacific would do well to consider Russia's own military power in that region. Just last month, the Russian and Chinese navies conducted a joint patrol off the coast of Alaska, the largest such operation in anyone's memory.

These revisionist powers are not going to go away. They will not be classified by economic envoys. Strategic competition will continue to test global interests and reach.

It is time to work more closely with friends and allies. It is time to invest more seriously in hard power and industrial capacity. It is time for the Biden administration to prioritize actions over words.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on another matter, the Biden administration announced yesterday that it is seeking new recruits in its war on affordable and reliable American energy to fill the ranks of a new program called American Climate Corps.

While the administration works overtime to freeze sensible development like energy pipelines, its latest initiative would, essentially, set up a taxpayer-funded pipeline for turning climate activists into climate bureaucrats.

Now, President Biden's nostalgia for FDR's New Deal is already well-docu-

mented. So setting aside the absurdity of Washington Democrats' fixation with the Green New Deal, it would be hard to imagine an economic moment less well-suited to a new Depression-era work program.

This isn't the early 1930s, when the American people were up against high unemployment and low inflation. In fact, what the Democrats' runaway spending has dumped on working families today is just the opposite. For 2 years now, we have historic inflation and a record labor shortage.

This is such a profoundly tone-deaf idea it couldn't even earn the support of the President's own party here in the Senate during votes on Democrats' so-called Inflation Reduction Act last year. Not a single one of our colleagues joined Senator SANDERS in voting for his amendment to create a climate work project on the taxpayers' dime.

Apparently, that hasn't deterred President Biden or the leftwing activists behind the wheel of his administration's energy policies.

As working families struggle to afford gas, electricity, and groceries, the advice from wealthy blue State liberals is, apparently, to shell out for an expensive electric car and foot the bill for the so-called Climate Corps.

There is no Hoover Dam or Lincoln Tunnel on the other side of this nonsense spending, just Potemkin jobs and a new make-work program when there is plenty of work to go around.

Activists are calling it climate justice. But it doesn't sound like justice to the working families trying to get by President Biden's watch.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of the following named officer for appointment as Chief of Staff of the Army and appointment in the United States Army to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 7033: to be General, Gen. Randy A. George.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

NOMINATION OF GENERAL RANDY A. GEORGE

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about my dear friend and native Iowan, GEN Randy A. George, before we vote on his nomination to be the next Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army.

As I said in the Armed Services Committee, I believe General George is the right man for this critical job. General George grew up in Alden, IA, a town with just over 700 residents. He joined the Army straight out of high school and was later commissioned at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

General George is a decorated war fighter with extensive combat service, including in the Gulf War, the Iraq War, and the war in Afghanistan.

He has been instrumental in leading our great Army, and I am excited to see him confirmed to be the Chief of Staff of the Army.

As an Army veteran myself, I have full confidence that he will continue to modernize the Army and maintain our highly trained and lethal force to fight and win our Nation's wars.

General George is a hard-working public servant who knows the needs of our soldiers and their families. He, too, is a great family man. And I would like to thank his wife and his West Point classmate Patty and their two children, Grant and Andy, for their selfless commitment and support over the years.

I firmly believe that General George's qualifications, record, and character—and, of course, his great home State of Iowa—make him the right nominee to serve in this important role.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON GEORGE NOMINATION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the George nomination?

Mr. HEINRICH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 96, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 237 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Baldwin	Cardin	Duckworth
Barrasso	Carper	Durbin
Bennet	Casey	Ernst
Blackburn	Cassidy	Fetterman
Blumenthal	Collins	Fischer
Booker	Coons	Gillibrand
Boozman	Cornyn	Graham
Braun	Cortez Masto	Grassley
Britt	Cotton	Hagerty
Brown	Cramer	Hassan
Budd	Crapo	Hawley
Cantwell	Cruz	Heinrich
Capito	Daines	Hickenlooper

Hirono	Mullin	Shaheen
Hoeven	Murphy	Sinema
Hyde-Smith	Murray	Smith
Johnson	Ossoff	Stabenow
Kaine	Padilla	Sullivan
Kelly	Paul	Tester
Kennedy	Peters	Thune
King	Reed	Tillis
Klobuchar	Ricketts	Tuberville
Lankford	Risch	Van Hollen
Lujan	Romney	Vance
Lummis	Rosen	Warner
Manchin	Rounds	Warnock
Markey	Rubio	Warren
Marshall	Sanders	Welch
McConnell	Schatz	Whitehouse
Menendez	Schmitt	Wicker
Merkley	Schumer	Wyden
Moran	Scott (FL)	Young

NAYS—1

Lee

NOT VOTING—3

Feinstein Murkowski Scott (SC)

The nomination was confirmed. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 249, Gen. Eric M. Smith for appointment as Commandant of the Marine Corps and appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 8043: to be General.

Charles E. Schumer, Mark Kelly, Patty Murray, Alex Padilla, Tammy Baldwin, Angus S. King, Jr., Catherine Cortez Masto, Margaret Wood Hassan, Debbie Stabenow, Michael F. Bennet, Richard Blumenthal, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Martin Heinrich, Maria Cantwell, Benjamin L. Cardin, Chris Van Hollen, Richard J. Durbin, Jack Reed, Brian Schatz.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of the following named officer for appointment as Commandant of the Marine Corps and appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 8043: to be General, Gen. Eric M. Smith, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) would have voted "yea."

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 96, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 238 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Baldwin	Graham	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Peters
Bennet	Hagerty	Reed
Blackburn	Hassan	Ricketts
Blumenthal	Hawley	Risch
Booker	Heinrich	Rosen
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Braun	Hirono	Rubio
Britt	Hoeven	Sanders
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Budd	Johnson	Schmitt
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Capito	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Kennedy	Shaheen
Carper	King	Sinema
Casey	Klobuchar	Smith
Cassidy	Lankford	Stabenow
Collins	Lee	Sullivan
Coons	Lujan	Tester
Cornyn	Lummis	Thune
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Tillis
Cotton	Markey	Tuberville
Cramer	Marshall	Van Hollen
Crapo	McConnell	Vance
Cruz	Menendez	Warner
Daines	Merkley	Warnock
Duckworth	Moran	Warren
Durbin	Mullin	Welch
Ernst	Murphy	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Murray	Wicker
Fischer	Ossoff	Wyden
Gillibrand	Padilla	Young

NOT VOTING—4

Feinstein Romney
Murkowski Scott (SC)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). On this vote, the yeas are 96, the nays are 0.

The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of the following named officer for appointment as Commandant of the Marine Corps and appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., sections 601 and 8043: to be General, Gen. Eric M. Smith.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2791

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, since 1790, the Coast Guard, our Nation's oldest continuous seagoing service, has been the world's premier force in maritime safety, security, and stewardship. Guided by its core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty, the Coast Guard is a symbol of resolve to our adversaries and of hope to those in peril at sea.

Our Nation relies on more than 50,000 members of the Coast Guard each day to keep our country safe, to project national power, and to champion the rule

of law and governance on our waters and beyond.

In Texas, Coast Guard members are on patrol 365 days a year. From Station South Padre Island to Sector Houston-Galveston and beyond, Coast Guard members keep our citizens and our country safe. Just this week, a Coast Guard Air Station Houston helicopter crew completed a daring rescue, saving the life of a mariner 10 miles off the coast of Galveston, TX. When our Nation calls, the Coast Guard is always ready to answer.

As the ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee, which has responsibility for policies affecting the Coast Guard and Coast Guard servicemembers and their families, I believe that in the event of a shutdown, the Coast Guard must be paid without question and without delay.

That is why, last week, I introduced the bipartisan Pay Our Coast Guard Act, which would treat coastguardsmen the same as all other servicemembers for purposes of pay and benefits if there is a lapse in appropriations. If a continuing resolution is not passed, the prudent thing to do—the right thing to do—is to agree now that we will pay the men and women of the Coast Guard. That is what this bill does.

If there is a shutdown, military personnel from all branches of the Armed Forces will keep working. In past shutdowns, Congress acted swiftly to pay our troops. But since the Coast Guard is housed in the Department of Homeland Security and not the Department of Defense, coastguardsmen were left out; they weren't compensated.

Our bipartisan legislation, which I introduced along with Senators CANTWELL, SULLIVAN, and BALDWIN, avoids that scenario by saying if there is a shutdown, all of our Armed Forces, including the Coast Guard, must be paid. This bipartisan bill makes clear, here and now, that we will not take the Coast Guard hostage to a shutdown fight.

While the American people can always count on the Coast Guard, the Coast Guard has not been always able to count on this Chamber to do the right thing. During the last government shutdown, which was precipitated by the Democrat majority in this Chamber in 2019, members of a single branch of our Armed Forces, the Coast Guard, worked without paychecks for 34 days, oftentimes alongside servicemembers of other branches who were still being paid. The Defense Department was funded, but the Homeland Security Department was not. So I joined with several Senate colleagues to advance a bill that would have treated members of the Coast Guard the same as those of the Air Force, the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps.

That bill was brought up before the entire U.S. Senate, but it was blocked by the Democratic leader.

The only thing necessary to ensure timely payment of every Coast Guard servicemember was for my colleagues