

Gone are the days when the migrants showing up at our borders were from our neighboring country to the south. Now migrants are flooding in on trains from El Salvador, Haiti, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and most significant to me, China.

We have a gaping hole in our national security that stretches from California to Texas and, I assume, our other borders as well, and our adversaries are already using that circumstance to their advantage.

I visited the border with a bipartisan group of Senators earlier this year and witnessed Chinese nationals being apprehended—apprehended—by our border agents.

This week, it was reported that approximately 18,000 Chinese nationals had been encountered at the southern border. This is compared to 2,000 in 2022 and only 450—still a big number—in 2021. It was also reported that some of these individuals potentially had ties to the Chinese Communist Party and that not one of them was detained for any length of time.

This failure to respond to the arrival of the Chinese succeeded the FBI report that I had read, with great concern, about migrants with ties to ISIS who had been permitted to enter the country. The Customs and Border Patrol, which is overworked and understaffed, released an individual on the terrorist watch list into the country. The American people deserve answers from Secretary Mayorkas and from the Biden administration.

I have been on this floor previously, numerous times, like many of my colleagues, to make the case that the crisis at the southern border is causing an influx of illegal, deadly drugs—like fentanyl from China—to enter the United States and is leading to the overdose deaths of thousands of Americans. I made the case that this is a humanitarian crisis as mothers and children attempt to make the long, dangerous trek across Mexico. Along the way, they face hunger, heat waves, human trafficking, and drug cartels. Caravans with thousands of migrants continue to march on our southern border. Border agents have been pulled away to deal with the record number of migrants and are left without the manpower to try and stop drug and human traffickers, spies, and potential terrorists.

For a long time, we have worried about people just coming across our border who are violating our sovereignty and taking our jobs; but it is even more significant and more critical that we respond now as our law enforcement deals with drug cartels, human trafficking, and now our national security—harmed significantly by those who enter our country illegally to do us harm.

President Biden must act to ensure the stricter enforcement of our immigration laws, reinstate the construction of a wall or fencing in areas that are largely unprotected, and the ad-

ministration must send a message, loud and clear, that our border is closed to unlawful entrants.

It is way past time—way past time—we finished the wall and gave our law enforcement agents the tools they need to better protect our border. Instead, this administration is sitting on resources and paying storage fees for the unused border wall panels. With the President's lack of action, it is just an amazing circumstance we find ourselves in. Our national security is at stake, and we have failed to respond.

I would say that we can do more than one thing at one time. I also believe that the Senate should act to deliver lasting solutions to keep our border secure, to keep our communities safe, and to ensure the humane treatment of migrants. We could start by taking a vote on the Secure the Border Act. Securing our southern border shouldn't be—and I hope isn't—a Republican or a Democratic issue. It is not a Texas or a New Mexico or an Arizona issue. It is a national security issue.

Speaking of national security, I would be remiss if I didn't raise the importance of passing a supplemental appropriation that includes not only support for our efforts to contain the influx of people on our southern border and on our borders generally but that also includes money to support the efforts by the Ukrainian people to have a free country. While Ukrainian forces have not made a decisive breakthrough in their counteroffensive, they are making incremental progress that deserves our ongoing support.

The commitments made by our European allies now surpass America's, and the assistance that the United States has sent to Ukraine has been accounted for by multiple inspectors general. A failure on our part to remain committed would shake the confidence in the United States of allied capitals around the world. This, in turn, could lead to more aggression by more adversaries. Now is not the time to give up on Ukraine. Vladimir Putin is counting on our doing so. His only way to win—his only way to win—is to hang in long enough until the West—until the United States—and our allies grow tired or otherwise become distracted. America's resolve against Russia's aggression should be unwavering.

The world is watching and judging American dependability. If we are found unreliable, the world will become an even more dangerous place. If we fail, the world becomes a more dangerous place. This is certainly about Ukraine, but it is about the security and safety of the people of the United States. Looking the other way is not an option.

What is happening at our southern border and, in fact, what is happening well beyond our borders in Europe needs a serious response. The security of our country, the security of American citizens, the security of Kansans depends upon it.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WELCH). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONFIRMATION OF GENERAL ERIC M. SMITH

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I am on the floor for a couple of reasons but No. 1 and most important is to congratulate General Smith, Gen. Eric Smith, to be the new Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Now, the Presiding Officer may have seen the vote—a pretty impressive vote, 96 to 0. That does not happen a lot in the U.S. Senate. But every Senator on the floor just an hour ago gave Gen. Eric Smith a huge vote of confidence—and with good reason.

This is a Marine officer who has a stellar career—stellar career. He has commanded at every level in the Marine Corps: as an infantry officer, Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment. As a general officer, he commanded the U.S. Marine Corps Forces Southern Command, 1st Marine Corps Division, III MEF—Marine Expeditionary Force—and Marine Corps Combat Development Command. That is about as stellar a career as it gets.

Additionally, he is a serious combat veteran. As I have noted to my colleagues before, a lot of the flag officers in the military right now were the lieutenants and captains right after 9/11. This is a group of senior military leaders who have seen more combat than certainly almost any other generation since World War II. And General Smith was one of those: wounded in action in Iraq, did not want to go home; frontline commander in combat; served in Afghanistan.

Unfortunately, like a lot of commanders during these challenging wars, he had a number of marines and friends killed in action whom he was in command of. So he knows war. He knows the Marine Corps.

I look forward to working closely with General Smith on a whole host of issues related to the Marine Corps and now, as a member of the Joint Chiefs, related to the national defense of our country, including Marine Corps force design, including the Navy's requirement that is in law—in law, if you are watching, Secretary of the Navy Del Toro; it is in law—31 amphibys for the Marine Corps.

So these and many other issues I look forward to working with General Smith on. But again, 96 to 0.

Great job, General. Semper Fi.

Mr. President, I also think it is important to just talk a little bit about how we got here, and to be honest, we should have gotten here a lot earlier—weeks, if not months, earlier.

I am a pro-life and pro-military Senator, so I have been very involved in these negotiations between leadership

and some of our Members on issues of moving forward nominees but also on not agreeing with Secretary Austin's memo as it relates to travel issues.

There have been a number of us who have been trying to get to a resolution on some of the holds that are happening here on the Senate floor.

By the way, holds happen all the time. The way they are resolved 98 percent of the time is through compromise. So that is why I am trying to help my colleagues on both sides of the aisle and the administration and the Department of Defense. But in the meantime, there was nothing preventing the majority leader from bringing qualified military members to the floor for a vote—nothing. As a matter of fact, in the Senate, we vote on members of the Joint Chiefs all the time. That is a tradition here—when the Democrats have been in charge, when the Republicans have been in charge—but that has not been the priority here.

In the last several months, we have had 76 rollcall votes, everything from the Assistant Administrator of the EPA to district court judges, NLRB judges, Board members for the National Archives, Assistant Secretaries of Education, HHS. You name it, we have been confirming them, with the exception of one group: military officers.

A lot of the press is saying: Well, that was the Senator from Alabama.

That is not true. That is not true at all. We could be voting on individual members of the Joint Chiefs. That wasn't the priority. That wasn't the priority.

Senator TUBERVILLE was going to make a resolution, signed by 17 Senators, to file cloture on General Smith, and all of a sudden, the majority leader thought it was important to start moving forward on Joint Chiefs of Staff nominees. I think that is good. That shows some compromise. And I think even that little bit of compromise is going to help us on the broader issues that we are all trying to address.

But I do want to just correct the record. In our Ukraine briefing yesterday, Secretary Austin, Secretary of Defense, said he really appreciated Senator SCHUMER's leadership on filing cloture on these Joint Chiefs we just voted on. Well, with all due respect to Senator SCHUMER and Secretary Austin, it wasn't his leadership; it was our side of the aisle that forced his hand to do it. That is a fact. That is a fact.

So, Mr. Secretary, I know the Senate procedures can be a little confusing, but you might want to thank this side of the aisle for actually moving forward to make sure that Joint Chiefs are getting confirmed.

So I hope we continue to do that and continue to work like a number of us have been on a broader compromise here to move forward on these other military nominees.

By the way, I do welcome many of my Democratic colleagues' newfound

interest in national security. A number of them have been howling about national security and we are not ready and readiness issues. A lot of them, I have never heard them talk about national security, but they are all talking about it now. That is great. Welcome.

By the way, join me in criticizing President Biden for sending to us 3 years in a row three budgets each year that dramatically cut our Department of Defense.

President Biden's budget this year shrinks the Army, shrinks the Navy, shrinks the Marine Corps. It is exactly the wrong message to be sending Xi Jinping and Putin during one of the most dangerous times our Nation faced since the end of World War II.

So if you are worried about national security, join me on some of these. It is great. I hear a lot of howling from silent voices on national security from the other side of the aisle, so I welcome you to be caring about these issues.

I want to end where I started, and I want to thank and congratulate again General Smith. I also want to congratulate the new soon-to-be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General C.Q. Brown, who is also exceptionally qualified, and the new Chief of Staff of the Army, General George. All three were recently confirmed by the U.S. Senate in overwhelming numbers—overwhelming. That is progress. On both sides of the aisle, that is progress. That is what we needed. I am hopeful that progress will lead to more compromise on these other issues that we all know are important.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, for the last week, we have seen chaos and dysfunction in the House of Representatives as they try to come up with a single bill to fund the government to avert a shutdown. We are now 9 days away from a lapse in funding, and even though it is their responsibility under the Constitution to originate an appropriations bill, they have got nothing. They have no plan to pass a bill that can be signed into law.

I want to be really clear about this because when we had this debt ceiling fight earlier in the year, the bar was lowered so much for the House of Representatives that passing anything was considered a legislative victory. All the political pundits and newsletters out there were lauding the House of Representatives for passing a legislative vehicle—not one that could pass, not one that was well thought through, not one that was bipartisan, not one that was on its way to the President's desk, but just like passing something is like a huge victory. I was irritated back then because if CHUCK SCHUMER passed something on a partisan basis that couldn't be enacted by the House and wasn't going to be signed by the President of the United States, nobody would be giving him credit.

The point here is to make a law. The point here is to make a law. But they haven't even cleared the bar that was so low in the spring that even if you pass something that is largely symbolic, you have united your caucus and you have shown you can legislate. They have not. They have not shown that they can legislate.

But let's be clear. The consequences in the next 9 days are dire.

A few of my colleagues on the Senate side stopped us from being the legislative body that we ought to be. So let's back up a second.

Every year at the end of the year, we usually pass an appropriations bill. It is called an omnibus. It takes all 12 individual appropriations bills and piles them up into one, and everybody gets very irritated because it is so much, right, that it is difficult for a legislator to sort out what they like about a bill and what they don't like about a bill. It is hard to do amendments.

So lots of Members—mostly on the Republican side—said: You know what. We need to do the regular order.

What is the regular order? Well, it is a little bit in the eye of the beholder, but the basic idea is, we should have committee markups; we should vote on stuff; we should have amendments; we should behave like the legislative body we grew up learning about.

The regular order. We demand it.

So PATTY MURRAY, the chair of Appropriations, and SUSAN COLLINS, the vice chair of Appropriations—Democrat and Republican—together said: Let's do the regular order.

So we do a committee markup on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development. It happens to be my subcommittee. Unanimous, bipartisan vote. Then we do MILCON and VA. Unanimous, bipartisan vote. Then we do ag approps. Unanimous, bipartisan vote. Because people—correctly, in my view—demanded no more omnibuses. So we are going to do this. We are going to do it old school, right? How we should.

So we put together this process and, again, unanimous, bipartisan vote. So we tried to bunch these together, and then Republicans stopped us from pursuing the regular order. Three bills, each of which passed out of committee with unanimous, bipartisan support, 13 Republican votes—we couldn't even begin debate on the Senate floor.

What are we doing here? Americans across the country are counting on the Federal Government to help them, and right now, Congress is not getting it done. I get that there is plenty to argue about between Democrats and Republicans, particularly during this time of year, but we have to do our jobs.

Americans impacted by disasters are the ones that are most desperately in need. That includes the people on Maui who are just beginning the recovery process from last month's devastating wildfires, but also people in States across the country—in Vermont, in