

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

Florida, in California, in Texas, and in many other States. In each case, the need for recovery is so big that the local county or State can't manage the recovery.

That is what it means when the President declares a national disaster. It, sort of, just means it is a really big disaster. But at a technical level, what does it mean? It means that this thing is too big for county government. This thing is too big for State government.

So the President declares the disaster, and then we fund the disasters. We put money in the Disaster Relief Fund, and then FEMA can access it on behalf of whomever needs the help.

As it stands, without Congress providing additional funding to Federal Agencies that are working to respond to these disasters, aid to communities will dry up. For instance, FEMA just said that there is only \$2.4 billion remaining in its Disaster Relief Fund, and, as a result, it is delaying funding for over 1,000 long-term projects, totaling \$1.8 billion, in past disaster recovery zones in order to continue urgent work on Maui.

What do they do? When they run low, they prioritize current disasters. So they are servicing the problem on Maui, as they should be.

But anybody who had a disaster in the last couple of years—Louisiana, Texas, New Jersey, New York, California, South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida—all of them have their disaster recovery money frozen. Why? Because the House of Representatives adjourned for the week without having passed a single appropriations bill, because the Senate—Senate Democrats are ready to roll and many Senate Republicans are ready to roll—and we have blocked our own request. We asked for the regular order. We did it in regular order, and then they said: Actually, no, let's not do that.

I want us to all feel a collective sense of urgency, not just because the end of the Federal fiscal year is coming shortly and there does not appear to be a viable plan from the House of Representatives, but because there is special urgency as it relates to disaster response.

I know the Presiding Officer is working so hard to get resources for his home State and the terrible floods that he experienced. Obviously, MAZIE HIRONO and I are working very hard with our colleagues to try to get the funding that we need for Maui. But this isn't just a Maui or Vermont problem. This is an across-the-country problem.

By the way, the way the Disaster Relief Fund works, you prefund it. You don't fund individual disaster responses. You just put money in this pile—the Disaster Relief Fund—and then, wherever there is a disaster, you have access to it.

I have never seen—I have only been here 11 years, but I have never seen us decide not to fund disaster relief.

Let's fight about everything, except whether or not our fellow Americans

get the help that they need from the Federal Government. This is one of the core responsibilities of the Federal legislature. This is one of the core things we have to do, not just as a matter of public policy but morally. What are we here for other than to help our fellow Americans when they are in desperate situations?

In Hawaii, in West Maui, you have hundreds of kids still not in school. You have an elementary school that was destroyed. You have sewer and water treatment facilities that have been not destroyed but deeply damaged. You have Lahaina Harbor that is not operable. You have telecom services that are not operating at full capacity. You have roads that are trashed. And that is to say nothing of the 1,800 homes burnt to the ground, 2,200 structures—2,200 structures—and, very likely, between 100 and 200 dead.

We have to stop messing around here.

I have been known to be partisan sometimes. I have been known to get into it with my colleagues on the Republican side. But part of the beauty of the American system of government, when it works, is that you can fight about all the stuff that you are supposed to fight about and not fight about the stuff that you are not supposed to fight about. We are not supposed to fight about whether people on Maui or people in Vermont, or people in Florida or people in Texas or Louisiana or California get the help that they need.

We have to get our act together and get this money out.

I yield the floor.

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

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 307, Philip S. Hadji, to be a judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of 15 years, that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate, that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Philip S. Hadji, of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hadji nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

ARMS SALES NOTIFICATION

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, section 36(b) of the Arms Export Control Act requires that Congress receive prior notification of certain proposed arms sales as defined by that statute. Upon such notification, the Congress has 30 calendar days during which the sale may be reviewed. The provision stipulates that, in the Senate, the notification of proposed sales shall be sent to the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In keeping with the committee's intention to see that relevant information is available to the full Senate, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the notifications which have been received. If the cover letter references a classified annex, then such annex is available to all Senators in the office of the Foreign Relations Committee, room SD-423.

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

DEFENSE SECURITY
COOPERATION AGENCY,
Washington, DC.

Hon. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, we are forwarding herewith Transmittal No. 23-42, concerning the Army's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to the Government of Kuwait for defense articles and services estimated to cost \$150 million. We will issue a news release to notify the public of this proposed sale upon delivery of this letter to your office.

Sincerely,

JAMES A. HURSCH,
Director.

Enclosures.

TRANSMITTAL NO. 23-42

Notice of Proposed Issuance of Letter of Offer Pursuant to Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended

(i) Prospective Purchaser: Government of Kuwait.

(ii) Total Estimated Value:

Major Defense Equipment * 0 million.

Other 150 million.

Total 150 million.

Funding Source: National Funds.

(iii) Description and Quantity or Quantities of Articles or Services under Consideration for Purchase: