

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week, the Armed Services Committee voted to recommend a \$25 billion increase to topline defense spending.

In overwhelming bipartisan fashion, our colleagues rejected a fourth straight budget request from the Biden administration that failed to keep pace with inflation, much less the threat of China.

If this major investment is actually appropriated, it will be an overdue step toward equipping America's Armed Forces to meet an increasingly dangerous world.

But shortly after the committee's action, senior Senate Democrats shattered any expectation that they were ready to start taking the requirements of national defense seriously. They began with myths about the past.

The Democratic leader suggested in a statement that "Democrats have led the way in ensuring our military is the best trained and best equipped fighting force in the world."

Really? Guess again. Every year, Republicans have led efforts to secure defense spending beyond President Biden's meager requests.

When the administration initially wanted the Pentagon to pay for increasing operational costs in Europe out of hide, without backfill, it took Republicans demanding additional appropriations to buy new weapons to replace the older ones we were providing Ukraine.

For his part, our colleague from New York blocked an amendment to the infrastructure bill in 2021 that would have made an historic investment in the defense industrial base, and this was actually before the Russian escalation. And then Senate Democrats voted in lockstep to block a similar one during budget reconciliation.

All around the world, America's adversaries are offering clear and alarming reminders of how rapidly modern warfare is changing. The battlefields of Ukraine have become a laboratory for fast-evolving concepts like unmanned aerial vehicles, electronic warfare, and air defenses. Iran's war on Israel, America, and international shipping highlights the growing importance of long-range weapons and air and missile defense. And China's military modernization, from its strategic rocket force to its navy, underscores the stakes of neglecting our own defense in bold, red ink.

These threats offer us essential lessons about the deficiencies of our own

capabilities; that is, if we choose to act on them. America is literally years behind in building the sort of production capacity we need to sustain effective deterrence or win decisively if war actually comes.

The administration deserves credit for taking production of 155-millimeter artillery shells seriously, but they haven't directed the same urgency to critical air and missile defense interceptors or long-range weapons. Republicans fought to include hundreds of millions of dollars for these priorities in the supplemental, but it is long past time to put critical requirements like these in our base budget.

If the administration doesn't prioritize this procurement in its budgeting and contracting, we shouldn't be surprised when producers hesitate to invest in new production lines or new workers. We have to take the requirements of our national defense more seriously. What on Earth should the rest of the world conclude if we don't?

Next month, dozens of America's allies will arrive here in Washington for a summit of the most successful military alliance in world history. In the face of growing threats, they will have much to celebrate: the addition of two new allies in Finland and Sweden; greater cooperation with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, several of whom will be in attendance; and the more than 20 NATO member states who now meet or exceed the alliance's 2 percent spending target.

It is encouraging that so many of America's friends have taken long overdue steps toward stronger defense in response to Russia's aggression. But America cannot afford to be reactive. Threats to our interests are too great to wait for our adversaries to actually strike.

What example will we set? I know the one I would like to set. I know the message Ranking Member WICKER and the overwhelming majority of colleagues on the Armed Services Committee would like to send to the world. But it will take a great deal more seriousness from leading Senate Democrats for the promise of American strength and leadership to carry any weight. They could start by bringing the NDAA to the floor without delay.

NOMINATION OF MUSTAFA TAHER KASUBHAI

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, unfortunately, the Democratic leader has decided that instead of taking up the critical annual Defense authorization, the Senate will dedicate floor time this week to the latest in the Biden administration's parade of unfit nominations to the Federal bench.

The latest example is a judge nominated to the Federal district court in Oregon named Mustafa Kasubhai. Judge Kasubhai's record and judicial philosophy put him well outside the mainstream.

This nominee has bragged about his lack of commitment to standard juris-

prudential practices. During his time as a magistrate judge, he said we have to "set aside conventional ideas of proof"—of proof—"when we are dealing with the . . . interpersonal work of equity, diversity and inclusion."

Now, if by "conventional ideas of proof," he is referring to things like clear evidence or sworn witnesses and their testimony, then I think I tend to prefer conventional ideas.

Unfortunately, this only scratches the surface. This judge also sounds like a committed Marxist. He has authored an article promoting the integration of Marxist theory into property law and claimed that the notion of scarcity of natural resources was a myth promoted by a privileged elite.

He has heaped high praise on the disgraced racist prophet known for insisting that "the only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination."

As many of our colleagues know, I was fortunate to be here in Washington when Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, and I don't recall Dr. King calling for retribution. In fact, his name has become nearly synonymous with the exact opposite.

But apparently this is just one more subject on which this judge would prefer to leave "conventional ideas" behind. Well, when it comes to judicial nominations, I subscribe to conventional wisdom: A judge's job is to follow the law, not the passing fads of woke politics.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in rejecting this nomination.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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 Katherine E. Oler, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, 80 years ago this month, America and our allies embarked on a mission that would change the course of history. We stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Along with our allies, we formed the largest armada in world history, with more than 5,000 ships and 13,000 aircraft, with the goal of liberating Nazi-occupied Europe and defending the free world. To our country's eternal gratitude, these brave soldiers succeeded in their mission.

On the 80th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, I joined a bipartisan Senate delegation to Normandy to honor the Americans—among them, Tennesseans—who put their lives on the line in the name of freedom.

Of the 16.4 million Americans who served in World War II, less than 1 percent are still with us today. So it was a special honor to meet with some of those brave heroes who served, and we sat together as we commemorated this day.

Among them was Tennessee native Cletis Bailey, who fought to liberate Europe while serving in the 84th Infantry Division. Two years ago, at the age of 96, Mr. Bailey received a Bronze Star for fighting at the Battle of the Bulge. That was 76 years after his service had come to an end.

Like so many Americans who served in World War II, Mr. Bailey was gracious and humble about the incredible sacrifices that he made to defend the country. It was a powerful reminder that the "greatest generation" viewed their service to our country, even through the horrors of war, as their duty as American citizens.

But during the memorial ceremonies, these heroes received the recognition they deserve in front of a crowd of 10,000 people from all over the world. It was so moving to see French President Macron recognize 11 U.S. veterans with the Legion of Honor—France's highest distinction—for their role in helping to free France from Nazi oppression.

While we thanked the surviving D-Day veterans for their service, our delegation also honored the brave soldiers who never returned home to America. In Normandy, there is no greater symbol of their sacrifice than the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, which holds the graves of 9,387 American war dead. Many of these warriors fell just hundreds of feet away from the cemetery grounds right there on Omaha Beach—the site of the fiercest fighting on D-Day, where U.S. forces suffered approximately 2,400 casualties.

While many markers of the landings have long since disappeared, along the coastline, you will still see fortifications which Nazi forces used to rain machine gun fire on American soldiers who stormed the beaches to free a continent.

In so many ways, Normandy is a reminder that America is the home of

the free because of the brave. And while we can never repay their sacrifices, we must ensure that no veteran is ever left behind—especially when it comes to the benefits and the quality care they deserve.

In the Senate, I have championed legislation to improve the Department of Veterans Affairs' caregiver program and protect veterans' personal information. Thankfully, both of these bills have become law, but there is much more that needs to be done to honor their service. That is why I introduced the Veterans Health Care Freedom Act, which would expand healthcare options for veterans by allowing them to seek care in their local communities instead of VA facilities that are often far away from their homes.

These efforts will not only benefit our Nation's veterans but also the more than 1.2 million Active-Duty troops when their service comes to an end. During the delegation trip, I was pleased to meet many of these brave warriors, including members of Fort Campbell's 101st Airborne Division who live in Tennessee.

On D-Day, the 101st was crucial to the Allies' victory, parachuting into France behind enemy lines to clear a path for the infantry divisions that were storming the beaches. Eighty years later, the current members of the 101st honored this incredible legacy, conducting an air assault drill in Carentan, a French town liberated by the 101st.

The outpouring of support for our veterans and servicemembers was a powerful reminder of General Eisenhower's words to the 175,000-strong expeditionary force on the eve of the D-Day landings: that—then and now—"the hope and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with" America and our Armed Forces.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, last week, the United States and Allied nations observed a significant milestone in world history: the 80th anniversary of D-Day. That day—by land, air, and sea—this massive military operation unleashed the largest amphibious assault known to the world.

More than 18,000 paratroopers dropped onto the beaches of Normandy. More than 14,000 dispatches from Allied Air Forces provided cover. Nearly 7,000 naval vessels participated, including more than 132,000 ground troops who swam ashore amid heavy German artillery.

American families lost 2,500 servicemembers on D-Day alone. All told, as

we know, more than 400,000 Americans died during World War II serving their country. These courageous patriots defended America's standing as the beacon of hope and freedom around the world.

The sacrifice of the American people to back the war effort allowed the United States to flex its military superiority alongside the Allied forces. That effort bested the Axis powers, defeating their authoritarian regimes and ending the Holocaust, where 6 million Jewish people lost their lives. They were murdered.

At every opportunity, Barbara and I are honored to greet veterans who have come to Washington, DC, in what we call Honor Flights, to visit the World War II Memorial.

A World War II hero and former Senate majority leader here in the Senate, Bob Dole, came to be my best friend. He took me, a fellow midwesterner, under his wing when I first came to the U.S. Senate.

My departed friend brought uncommon courage to the battlefield, and we all know he brought principled leadership to the U.S. Senate. His mentorship made a lasting impression on me and my work in Congress. That includes a nonnegotiable tenet of America's national security, which is peace through strength.

You see, widespread isolationist sentiment kept the United States from entering World War I and World War II. America stayed on the sidelines until the cost of aggression was too high, and the threat to the United States became obviously more acute.

Separated as we are from Europe and Asia by two vast oceans and wishing no one any harm, Americans would naturally feel that we ought to be left alone and ignore foreign conflicts.

Now, here is the lesson for today. The United States learned this lesson from World War II: Preventing and stopping aggression very early is much less costly in dollars and lives.

We learned what happens when you wait. When unchecked aggression has lit the world on fire, we are forced to fight a devastating world war.

That is why the United States led our allies in creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, better known as NATO. This most successful defensive alliance in history turned 75 this year.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Madam President, now, this brings me to the purpose of my comments today. Over the next few months, I will be drilling down on the issue of America's military readiness. I have grave concerns that the U.S. military has too many chinks in its armor. For the first time in decades, the invincibility of the U.S. military is questionable, which compromises the safety and security of 330 million Americans.

Scaling back resources for the U.S. military, year after year, undermines morale, weakens troop preparedness, and sends a dangerous signal to America's allies, as well as our adversaries.