

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

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

#### BUSINESS BEFORE THE SENATE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I would like to begin by wishing our colleagues a very happy new year and welcoming everyone back to begin a new session.

There is a tremendous amount on the Senate's plate, beginning with the unfinished business of the year that just ended.

Yesterday, negotiators announced they had agreed on a path to completing full year appropriations for the fiscal year that began 3 months ago. Delivering on this basic governing responsibility in a timely manner has proven a tough row to hoe, and building broad recognition of the most urgent priorities facing our Nation remains difficult.

Here is the truth. Threats to U.S. national security are growing, and the Biden administration's habit of proposing real-dollar cuts to defense funding is a streak that must end at three. With its forthcoming budget request for fiscal year 2025, the administration needs to finally start taking the long-term needs of America's national security seriously.

But Congress's most immediate opportunity to address urgent national security priorities will be supplemental legislation in the coming weeks. I was encouraged to see that Senator LANKFORD and our Democratic colleagues made progress toward an agreement to put meaningful border security policy at the heart of this supplemental.

As negotiations continued over the holiday break, Customs and Border Protection reported that December set a new, alltime monthly tally for southern border apprehensions. The Biden administration's border crisis is not going to fix itself, and the status quo is unacceptable. The answer, as Republicans have been saying, literally for years, is to restore meaningful border enforcement and fix the broken policies that the cartels are exploiting to devastating effect. And I am grateful to Senator LANKFORD for continuing to insist on such commonsense steps at the negotiating table.

The stakes here are quite high. We have an opportunity to make the most comprehensive headway on border security in a generation.

But our national security challenges don't end at our own borders. The threats we face are intertwined, and the coming days will show the world whether America is willing to treat them accordingly. Allies and adversaries alike will be curious what we do with news that Russia is now attacking targets in Ukraine with ballistic missiles supplied by the rogue Kim regime in North Korea, following the suicide drones provided by Iran. Yet again, it is abundantly clear that authoritarians

support authoritarians—as if our clear-eyed Pacific partners like Japan, South Korea, and Australia needed more evidence that what happens in Ukraine matters in their own neighborhood; as if we needed yet another reminder that facing down an expanded industrial base in Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea will require America and our allies and partners to invest more seriously in our own defense production capacity.

Meanwhile, terrorists in Yemen are spelling out in painful detail just how wide the ripples of Iran's war machine extend. The world's most active state sponsor of terror isn't just a destabilizing force in the Middle East. Tehran isn't just sowing chaos for American-minded partners in the region. Tehran's bloody influence isn't even limited to helping to train the Hamas and PIJ terrorists who conducted the horrific massacre of Israeli Jews on October 7, or to building Hezbollah into a top-tier international terrorist organization, or to the repeated attacks its proxies have carried out against U.S. personnel in Iraq and Syria.

The Houthis' campaign against civilian ships in the Red Sea is an assault on the global economy that the world has no choice but to address. Once more, an adversary's initiative has forced a reluctant administration to act.

With fawning conciliation and half measures, the Biden administration has squandered deterrence against Iran. Russia is openly mocking the fickleness of Western support for Ukraine. And China, our single greatest strategic adversary, is watching closely to see if America can still manage to lead or sustain credible resistance to authoritarian violence.

So these are the stakes after 3 years of the administration's foreign policy. The world is asking not when or how but whether the world's greatest superpower will start acting like one, which makes our work on the supplemental national security legislation even more urgent. Beginning at the southern border, we must demonstrate that America is up for the challenges we face. The Senate cannot afford to get this wrong.

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. DURBIN. 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.

#### IMMIGRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, you know as well as I do what is happening in our home State of Illinois when it comes to the migrants that are being bussed from Texas, primarily, into our State—the impact it has had in the State and in the city of Chicago, in

particular. These migrants are arriving in the city without any consultation or warning and are being dumped in places near the city, totally unprepared to face the cruelty of the winter that we are facing in Chicago.

I am amazed at the number of people who have shown extraordinary caring and have stepped forward to try to help. I thank Catholic Charities, Salvation Army—there are so many groups. There is a New Life Center, Matthew DeMateo—extraordinary, just a miracle worker. He manages to find a way to put a roof over the heads of those migrants that come to our city and give them a fighting chance to have a decent life. So many more just like him prepare to step up and provide shelter, provide basic clothing, food, accessibility to schools, and more.

I really want to commend the mayor as well. Brandon Johnson has taken an approach toward this which I think is humane and consistent with the traditions of America. He shows a caring heart time and again, and I respect him so much for it.

Recently, the city of Chicago tried to put some order into this disorderly process, identifying times and places where the buses could stop so that people could be received properly, cared for, and go about their lives as best they could.

But, unfortunately, there has only been one example of cooperation by the State of Texas. There are plenty of examples the other way—people who are sent to airports in Rockford where they are dumped out of airplanes on the tarmac with no place to turn; people who are put in suburban towns and rural areas, which even if they wanted to help, would be so limited to what they could do.

We understand the politics of the situation better than most. We do politics for a living. But there are a lot of people who are helpless and victims of this situation who need to be taken into consideration.

The city of Chicago gave the Texas Governor a safe, convenient, accessible option to drop the migrants off at a warm shelter for orderly processing, but only one bus from Texas has attempted to register with the city. The Texas Governor has chosen cruelty and chaos over orderly and humane processing.

I don't understand the politics of that moment. These people are as vulnerable as any people on earth. They are doing the best they can for themselves, and they are in a situation where they need a helping hand in many instances.

Last week, my colleagues in the Senate were working on a negotiated border compromise to deal with the policy and law on the border. I support that completely. I don't know what the final product will be, and I am hoping to support the bill. This process is long, long overdue.

I made immigration one of the issues of concern for my services. I am the

original author of the DREAM Act that was part of the Gang of 8 10 years ago that passed legislation—bipartisan legislation—on the floor of the U.S. Senate. I believe that it is important—it is inevitable—that we deal with this in a humane and thoughtful way.

And let me say a word about what is going on at the border. I believe in the asylum process. If you are a student of history, you know that during World War II, the United States had a policy of turning away refugees.

There is the well-publicized and notorious example of the SS *St. Louis*, a ship which came from Europe and tried to find a port to disembark in Havana and in Florida and failed. The passengers were returned to Europe—some 700 of them—many of whom died in the Holocaust. They were Jewish people looking for a safe place in the world where they could live, and we turned them away in World War II. That is a fact.

But at the end of the war, we decided there would be a different approach in the future. We would have an orderly international process led by the United States when it came to refugees. And we established that and lived with it under Presidents of both political parties for decades.

The situation we face at the border today defies what I just described to you: the desperate people, in numbers we can handle, coming into the United States through an asylum process. What we are facing now is just not comparable at all. The thousands and thousands of people who are turning up at our borders each day are unsustainable.

There was a story in the New York Times this morning about the number of immigrants who are coming to our southern Mexican border from Africa—Africa. And they told a story about a group of people in Guinea, Africa, who found a way to travel from Guinea to Turkey, then to fly from Turkey to Colombia, then from Colombia to Honduras, and then to Nicaragua, where they were transported to the border.

This defies a stereotype in our mind about where the refugees are coming from in Central America. In this last year, more than 10,000 people from Uzbekistan showed up at our southern border in Mexico. How do you explain this?

Well, one explanation is pretty obvious. We have a refugee crisis in this world, the likes of which we have never seen and in numbers from all over the world—hundreds of thousands of people who are desperately looking. Today, there are over 100 million displaced people worldwide, including over 30 million refugees. It is the largest refugee crisis in history. That is the starting point of this conversation.

The second point is equally important. Many of these people have found their way to the United States through international groups, some of them for very sinister purposes, who are trying to make a lot of money on helpless peo-

ple by promising them they could get into the United States and have a much better life. These people are being exploited in Africa, in Asia, and around the world, and we have to deal with this seriously. They are not the ordinary course of refugees coming to the United States. They are overwhelming numbers that have completely bankrupted our system in its response.

I hope this bipartisan group finds a way to deal with it and to resolve it in a humane fashion; and I am open to any suggestion. In the meantime, I want to commend the people in my State—the mayor and others, who are stepping up to do their very best to be humane and American in their response. Many of us can trace our own immigrant roots back one generation or two. I am certainly one of those. My mother was an immigrant to this country. I have met with these immigrants from all over the world and all over the United States, and I have talked to them. And, although I say to them the situation at our border is not sustainable, it has to change, and we can't deal with the massive numbers that come our way. I look at each one of them and I see in their eyes the eyes of my own family making that decision to come here, desperately trying to get to the United States. It is a natural human instinct.

But we need an orderly process. The bill that we passed, the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act, established such a process. We took the 11 million people undocumented in the Nation, and we said to them: Step forward, identify yourself, register yourself, pay your taxes, and go on working. Realize at a future time, many, many years from now, you may be eligible for legal status and even citizenship. That was part of the promise. And we need to establish such an approach today to find a way to deal with those who are here and those who want to stay here and are of no danger to the United States.

The fact is, we cannot absorb all the people in the world who want to come to the United States at this moment. It is just not practical. It is not humane even to think in those terms. But those who are here should be brought in and assimilated into this country. If they are here and are no danger to our country, they can be an important part of our future. We need them in so many different ways.

The Presiding Officer and I know about the agricultural community in our own State who have come to us desperate. These are conservative individuals politically who see the reality that our workforce is not adequate for our economy and the birthrate is not sufficient for us to sustain a new population of workers.

Let's find a thoughtful way to deal with this, stop overwhelming the border, and have an orderly process. That can be done, but it has to be done on a bipartisan basis.

Some of the people involved in this process have said publicly they don't

want to find a solution, that they have too good a political issue. I hope that they are wrong. I hope that we can find a solution on a bipartisan basis that serves our Nation and that serves the world.

We need an orderly process. It took 3 to 5 years over in Europe for them to come up with their own process. We need to find our own way of doing so. I am willing to work with them as chairman of the Judiciary Committee and with my background on immigration issues, if there is anything I can add to the process.

I hope that this week, we will receive a report from this bipartisan committee that moves us in a direction of an orderly process at our border while not being overwhelmed with numbers that are unsustainable.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wisconsin.

REMEMBERING HERB KOHL

Ms. BALDWIN. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of former U.S. Senator Herb Kohl.

Herb was a successful businessman, a generous philanthropist, a dedicated public servant, and my role model. He was a model boss, public servant, and Senator—always putting people first. But, if you knew Herb, you knew how humble he was. In fact, after he was first sworn in, one of his colleagues whom he respected in this body said to him: You are going to be a model Senator. I have heard him tell this story a number of times. He decided to look up the definition of “model,” and he quipped back by saying: “Model, my friends, is a small replica of the real thing,” making light of his rather modest stature and deflecting credit for his leadership. That scenario embodies a lot of who Herb was. He was modest, funny, and at his core, an unrelenting advocate for the people of the State of Wisconsin.

Senator Kohl served in this body for 24 years, but he served the people of Wisconsin and our country throughout his entire life. In the Senate, he didn't care how long a fight would take, how long the odds were, or who he was up against; if it would help the people of Wisconsin, it was worthy of him to engage in that fight. His mantra throughout his service was “Nobody's Senator But Yours,” and his record in Washington reflected that commitment to a tee.

In Congress, he worked quietly, diligently, and with focus. Herb fought to get Wisconsin's dairy farmers fair prices for their products, and he worked to invest in and save Wisconsin's family farms. He championed vital food assistance programs that children and working families rely on and worked to expand access to affordable childcare, elder care, and healthcare for millions of Americans. Herb knew that taking care of our great outdoors and our environment was key not only to our Wisconsin way of life but also to our economy. Working with both environmentalists and