

that it doesn't like—PBS and NPR. That is not an investigation that was opened on the basis of a determination by the full Commission—in fact, two members have been fired—but on the political preferences of the Trump administration.

Of course, we have had lawsuits against the press when the President did not like a report of a poll that was printed in a newspaper in Iowa.

I am very concerned about attacks on the freedom of speech.

We have had Executive orders that target law firms because the President did not like some members of that law firm and who they represented. The President has issued Executive orders punishing firms that represent his political opponents and who, in his opinion, were involved in litigation against him when he was a private citizen.

This is not actually an assault based upon an investigation; it is an attack that is based upon the personal annoyance of the President himself.

We are seeing the Trump administration arresting students who are in the country legally. They are here legally, and they are arrested not because they committed a crime but because they took a viewpoint that the President disagreed with.

We have even seen the censoring of words that the administration doesn't like, and there is a whole list of words that cannot be used. Of course, one of the incredibly petty examples that shows how extreme this is and how wanton it is was removing references to the Enola Gay from Department of Defense websites because they included the word "gay."

This is a very important inflection point in our democracy. The First Amendment is being challenged by the Executive, who is unravelling the protections that have been absolute through thick and thin.

We all, in this Chamber, have to stand up for the First Amendment. And we can have disagreements on the speech that we agree with and we disagree with vehemently; but our obligation, as a separate branch of government, as Members of the U.S. Senate, is to defend the rights of people to have free speech, whether they agree with our political position or they don't.

So all of us must defend to our core the constitutional rights so essential to the well-being of our democracy: the freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, freedom of petition government, and, of course, the freedom of the press.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

TARIFFS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to talk a few minutes tonight about a couple of topics—only one, if I run short of time, because I don't want to delay our vote. The first topic I would like to talk about—I know it is very sensitive—is trade and tariffs. They have both been much in the news lately.

There are really only two reasons why a country would impose a tariff, and every country in the world, to my knowledge, does have tariffs. There are only two reasons for a country to impose a tariff: first, for national security.

I think it is virtually unchallenged that China, if it could, would destroy the United States of America—not the people of China, but the Government of China. I regret to say that, and I hope someday we will live in a world where that isn't the case, but I think it is undoubtedly and unconditionally the truth.

So if China is determined to—let me try to use a more neutral word—to undermine the United States of America, I could see where we would limit, want to limit, some of our goods such as, let's say, semiconductor design equipment. We would limit the sale of some of our precious technology to China. That is what I mean by "national security."

But the other reason, and the reason that most countries use the tariff, is to protect the domestic industry.

Let me give you an example. These are not two countries, but they are two States; and this would be unconstitutional, but I think it will serve my purpose. Let's suppose that Louisiana, which has the best king cakes in the Milky Way, can produce a king cake for \$10, and our friends in Alabama, they can produce a king cake—not nearly as good as Louisiana's—but the best they can do is produce it for \$12. Well, I would not agree, but I could understand why the elected officials in Alabama are going to say: Well, Louisiana's king cake is 10 bucks, our king cake is \$12. We want to protect our king cake bakers here in Alabama, so we are going to impose a tariff.

What would that do? Let's suppose they impose a \$4 tariff. So now the king cake, the better king cake made in Louisiana sold in Alabama would cost \$14, and that would force people to buy the \$12 Alabama king cake.

Now, my personal opinion is that most Alabamians, who are very smart people, would pay extra for the Louisiana king cake because it is so much better, but that is how tariffs work. If you have a domestic industry, like a king cake bakery, and you want to protect it from competition to allow it to grow and employ the people in that particular country, maybe you impose a tax, a tariff, on folks on the outside of your country who want to sell into your country.

I want to say this unequivocally. Canada is one of my favorite countries in the world, and the American people and the people of Canada are friends, and I would like our economies to be friends. And I mean that. But lately, we have been having a gentle disagreement—some would say not so gentle—in terms of tariffs and trade and our economy.

Canada and the United States of America do a lot of business with each

other. In 2024, the United States sold to the people of Canada about \$350 billion in goods—that is a lot of goods, \$350 billion. Canada sold Canadian goods to the United States in the amount of \$412 billion. So there is what we call a trade deficit of \$63 billion.

And then you drill a little deeper, and you realize that the U.S. economy is 10 times bigger than the Canadian economy, and the population of the United States of America is 8 times bigger than the population of Canada. Canada has 41 million people; America has 340 million.

So you step back for a second, and you go, huh. Now, the United States is 8 times bigger, and our economy is 10 times larger than Canada's, but yet Canada is selling more of its goods into the United States than the United States is selling into Canada.

Any fair-minded person would have to conclude that it is because of tariffs. It is because the Canadian tariffs on American goods are higher than the American tariffs on Canadian goods. And that is what the dispute is all about.

President Trump, who believes passionately in the virtue of tariffs, thinks that the tariffs ought to be equal. That there shouldn't be a trade deficit.

Now, trade is very complicated, and I don't think that all trade deficits are bad. I am also not saying that all trade deficits are good. Trade in the complex global economy today is very complex.

But I see the President's point. I am not suggesting that I agree with the President on everything about tariffs, but when you have got your neighboring country and good friend that is 8 times smaller than you are, and in terms of population, it is 10 times smaller than you are, and your neighbor is selling \$63 billion more in goods to you than you are selling to them, that seems kind of unfair. And the President, as we all know, has made that point very vociferously.

In response, the Canadian Government, the new Prime Minister Carney, he has pretty much bowed up. When President Trump said: Well, the tariffs are uneven, so I am going to raise American tariffs, Prime Minister Carney has bowed up and said: Well, President Trump, you don't believe in free trade. You are not a free trader. If you raise your tariffs, then I am going to raise mine even more.

And that is how you get into a trade war. And I don't want a trade war. And I don't think Prime Minister Carney wants a trade war, and I don't think President Trump wants a trade war.

But I think Prime Minister Carney is wrong when he says that President Trump is not a free trader. President Trump is a free trader, but like most of us, he also believes in fair trading as well.

So here is my respectful, gentle challenge to Prime Minister Carney tonight. Prime Minister Carney, you have criticized President Trump, and I

see your point of view. You said, because he is raising tariffs on Canada, that he, President Trump, doesn't believe in free trade. You have said that he doesn't—he believes in tariffs. And you have said you are going—you, Mr. Carney, are going to change your tariffs.

I hope Prime Minister Carney does change his tariffs, but I hope he does so in a way that we have a race to the top and not to the bottom. Rather than the Prime Minister of Canada raising tariffs on the United States of America after the United States of America raises tariffs on Canada, which will cause us—friends, friends—to have a trade war, I would respectfully suggest to the Prime Minister Carney of Canada that he should reduce tariffs to zero. He should reduce all Canadian tariffs on United States' goods to zero and then turn to President Trump and say: I am asking you to remove all tariffs on Canada as well.

Now, if Prime Minister Carney believes in free trade—and I take him at his word that he does—and if President Trump believes in free trade, but fair trade—and I take him at his word that he does—then let's both go to zero. How much freer can trade be? How much fairer can trade be?

Let's avoid a trade war. Let's let those good Canadian companies compete with good American companies and selling goods into the United States, and let's let those good American companies compete with those good Canadian companies in terms of selling goods into Canada. And may the best, cheapest product win.

That is my respectful challenge to Prime Minister Carney tonight. If you think President Trump is being unfair and is not a free trader, then reduce your tariffs to zero, and ask President Trump to reduce our tariffs to zero on Canada, and let's go back to being friends again.

COVID

Mr. President, I want to talk briefly on another topic. Martin King famously said that “the arc of the moral universe”—the arc of the moral universe—“is long, but it bends toward justice.” Smart man. He was right. And if you believe in the fundamental goodness of humans—I am not saying that there is not some evil in all of us, but the fundamental goodness of humans, then you know he was right:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

This month, we finally got justice with respect to one of the individuals and one of the companies that, in my opinion, helped cause the coronavirus. Now let me explain what I mean. I am talking about a gentleman by the name of Dr. Peter Daszak. We have all heard that name. The name of his company is EcoHealth.

COVID, as we know, killed 20 million people across the world. It caused \$25 trillion of damage across the planet Earth.

Where did COVID come from? COVID, of course, coronavirus is a virus. That

is why we call it the coronavirus. It had to come from one of two places. First, it could have occurred naturally. It started in a bat, we know. Our scientists tell us that. And then viruses, which are very aggressive and very interested in self-survival, the virus jumped from another animal into another animal, which was consumed by a human being, and that is how the coronavirus became a human virus. It occurs naturally. It jumps from one animal to another.

But there is another way the coronavirus could have happened. It could have been engineered. We know that the FBI and we know that the Department of Energy and we know that the CIA and we know that Germany's top intelligence service all think the coronavirus was engineered.

What do I mean by engineered, engineering a virus? That means they think that someone took that virus that came from a bat and genetically altered it so that it would expose humans to the disease that the bats would get. That is coronavirus, and that is what happened. Many of our intelligence agencies think that is how the coronavirus started. They think it started in the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, China, where the first folks who got ill first appeared.

What does this have to do with Dr. Daszak? The Wuhan Institute of Virology—the Chinese lab that was conducting this research on engineering the virus—was funded in part with American taxpayer dollars. It was funded in part by Dr. Peter Daszak and his company EcoHealth.

Dr. Daszak was good friends and professional colleagues with Dr. Tony Fauci and with Dr. Francis Collins. Dr. Collins ran the National Institutes of Health. Under him was Dr. Anthony Fauci, who ran the NIAID, dealing with infectious diseases.

Dr. Collins and Dr. Fauci gave Dr. Peter Daszak, who ran EcoHealth and is a British zoologist, millions of dollars in grants, taxpayer money. Dr. Daszak took some of that money, and he gave it to the Wuhan lab. When he gave it to the Wuhan lab, the instructions to the Wuhan lab were to use the money to “understand the risk of bat coronavirus emergence.”

What does that mean? The purpose of this project at the Wuhan lab, funded in part by American taxpayer dollars, was to take the bat virus—the virus in the bat—modify it, and make it 10,000 times more infectious for lab mice, and that is what they did.

Many commentators and many news accounts say that what Dr. Daszak—with the money from American taxpayers that he had gotten from Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins—what they were doing was conducting gain-of-function research. You have heard that term. Gain-of-function research just means taking in this context an animal virus, a bat virus, and altering it genetically so it would jump into a human—pretty dangerous stuff.

Dr. Fauci has said that didn't happen, Dr. Collins says that didn't happen, and Dr. Daszak says that didn't happen, but everybody else says it did. The FBI says it did. The CIA says it did. The top spy agency in Germany says it did. The Department of Energy says it did.

So what happened? What happened? Well, we do know that the first two people that we know of in the world who got the coronavirus—the first two humans—were not people in the city of Wuhan; they were workers in the Wuhan lab. Remember, coronavirus supposedly hit, what, January, February? These two people who worked in the lab got it in November.

We also know that when the virus became really contagious, other than these two people who were working in the Wuhan lab, it became contagious in Wuhan, China, a few miles away from the Wuhan lab—pretty curious.

We also know that when word first broke of the coronavirus, Dr. Fauci learned about it. Do you know one of the first persons he called was Dr. Peter Daszak and said: What is going on?

We also know that Dr. Daszak was trying to convince the American people and the people of the world that the virus started naturally, that it didn't start from his gain-of-function research. We know that he rounded up a bunch of epidemiologists to write a fake article and start publishing it and others in a lot of professional scientific magazines to try to convince the world that the bat virus jumped to human beings naturally. We know that. That has all come out.

We also know that after the coronavirus happened, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins, instead of taking money away from Dr. Daszak, gave him extra money. We are not sure why, but they did.

As a result of this, let me say—you say: How did it escape the Wuhan lab? I just want to make this point. A molecular biologist at Rutgers University, Dr. Richard Ebright, studied the Wuhan lab. He said that its safety standards were about the same level of a typical dentist's office. I mean, you would think if you are going to do this gain-of-function research, you would do it in an environment so that once you take the bat virus and make it a human virus 10,000 times more contagious, you would try to keep it within the lab. Wuhan didn't do a very good job of that, we know now.

Well, there were denials back and forth, so we asked—“we” meaning the Congress—the Department of Health and Human Services to study this, and they did. They announced their decision this month. The Department of Health and Human Services has cut off all funding and formally debarred Dr. Peter Daszak and EcoHealth Alliance—of which he is the former president—for 5 years based on evidence uncovered by a congressional committee.