

and the director of the National Security Agency. As the commander of Cyber Command, General Haugh led the most formidable cyber warfighting force in the world, responsible for detecting, deterring, and overseeing cyber operations against America's adversaries, particularly China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, and various terrorist organizations.

General Haugh had a distinguished 34-year career within Air Force cyber and intelligence organizations, including multiple command assignments. Indeed, I was impressed with not only his technical skill, but his professionalism, his commitment to serving the Nation, protecting the Constitution, and doing it with a skill which is remarkable.

I am extremely concerned that press reports indicate that Laura Loomer, a fringe conspiracy theorist convinced President Trump to dismiss General Haugh and fire a slew of expert staff at the National Security Council for no discernible reason.

Now, when a conspiracy theorist can get into the President's office and convince him to fire an officer of General Haugh's demonstrated capacity and others on the National Security Council, there is not only something wrong with that individual, there is something wrong with the President who is listening to them without consulting others.

By the way, the Senate unanimously confirmed General Haugh to his post in December 2023, and once again, the Trump administration has given no explanation for his dismissal.

The Trump administration has not selected a new CYBERCOM commander, and it is unclear if there is any sense of urgency to fill this position. Secretary Hegseth has given a priceless gift to China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, by purging from our leadership one of our most vital national security commanders.

VADM Shoshana Chatfield served as the U.S. Military Representative to NATO, the first woman to hold this post. She held a vital leadership role within the alliance, particularly as it related to coordinating international support to Ukraine. Admiral Chatfield was among the finest military officers our Nation had to offer, with a 38-year career as a Navy helicopter pilot, foreign policy expert, and preeminent military educator, including as President of the Naval War College.

The Senate unanimously confirmed Vice Admiral Chatfield to her post in December 2023. Again, the Trump administration has given no justification for her dismissal and has not nominated any replacement to this critical posting at NATO.

Gen. James Slife was the U.S. Air Force Vice Chief of Staff, the second highest ranking officer in the Air Force. He spent most of his 36-year career as a special operations helicopter pilot, a daunting and dangerous pursuit. He deployed many times around

the world and flew countless combat missions in perilous conditions.

General Slife risked his life repeatedly for our Nation and led his fellow special operators and airmen with distinction. Again, the Senate unanimously confirmed General Slife to his post in December of 2023. The Trump administration has given no explanation for his dismissal, nor have they nominated any officer to help lead the Air Force.

Lt. Gen. Jennifer Short was the first female senior military assistant to the Secretary of Defense. She advised the Secretary and served as a representative for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, coordinating policy and operations across the Joint Staff, combatant commands, and with the U.S. interagency. A command pilot with more than 1,800 flight hours, including more than 430 combat hours in an A-10, she flew in Operations Southern Watch, Iraqi Freedom, and Enduring Freedom and commanded airmen at the squadron, wing, major command, and combatant command levels.

The Senate unanimously confirmed her to her post. The Trump administration has given no explanation for her dismissal.

Finally, I am deeply concerned by Secretary Hegseth's dismissal of the Judge Advocates General of the military services. These officers, known as TJAGs, are the most senior uniformed officers in the military. These officers each served more than 30 years in uniform as military lawyers. They were strictly apolitical and held fundamental roles ensuring that balanced, legal counsel was part of every military policy discussion. These officers provided legal oversight that spanned military justice, operational law, administrative compliance, government ethics, and U.S. adherence to the law of armed conflict.

These unprecedented firings, along with the firings of the inspectors general, should alarm everyone about the commitment of the President and the Secretary of Defense to follow the rule of law for the military and also within the United States and across the world.

The Defense Department is one of the most complex institutions in the world, with a budget of nearly \$900 billion and a workforce of nearly 3 million military and civilian personnel. It is an organization that requires strong leadership, stability, predictability, and trust. These qualities are critical because we ask the Department's men and women to risk their lives every day in the service of this country.

Those men and women who gave their lives and all of those who are still serving at this moment deserve the best. They deserve a leader who is truly laser-focused on readiness, lethality, and the mission, not someone who treats his position as Secretary as a performative exercise complete with a Twitter feed dominated with workout videos. Our servicemembers deserve better. They deserve some-

one who is focused on them, not focused on himself.

If Secretary Hegseth does not improve his job performance, the conditions at the Pentagon will continue to deteriorate, and something worse is bound to happen.

I hope Secretary Hegseth takes note. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

PETE HEGSETH

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to talk about how my Democratic colleagues, some RINOs, and the globalist media are working together to try to take down Donald Trump and derail his "America First" agenda. The latest target, President Trump's Secretary of Defense, Pete Hegseth.

I have said many times that I am convinced that many Democrats would rather see America and its leaders fail than to see this country succeed. It is sad, but it is true.

You know, when President Trump nominated Pete Hegseth to serve as Secretary of Defense, he intentionally picked someone who understands what it means to fight for this country, not from behind a desk but from the frontlines. Pete didn't inherit the stars on his uniform; he earned his stripes while serving in the Middle East. He is one of the few in Washington who has been in the fight and experienced the traumas of war. He knows firsthand what the warfighter goes through each and every day, which is why military recruiting has skyrocketed under his leadership.

I don't know about you, but as the dad of two sons, I am glad that the man leading our Department of Defense knows the dangers of war firsthand.

You know, for decades, this country has gotten involved in foreign wars that we have had no business being involved in. Thousands of Americans have lost their lives, trillions of dollars have been squandered fighting wars where no clear objectives past the victory have ever been provided to the American citizen. We just fight them. You would think that we would learn from at least one or two of these painful lessons, but, no, that hasn't stopped the globalist warmonger machine in Washington, DC. They love war because it funds paychecks.

You know, for this reason, Democrats, the swamp, and some RINOs banded together to oppose Pete Hegseth immediately after he was nominated by President Trump—didn't take them long. I am convinced that their opposition to Hegseth was only because he was not part of the military-industrial complex.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I came to the Senate floor to urge my colleagues to support Pete Hegseth's nomination because of his outsider—not Washington, DC, but outsider—status. Thankfully, he was confirmed. But, unfortunately, the smears—some of which have come from

my colleagues—have only gotten worse since Hegseth was confirmed.

Globalists and the media, some Republicans, are working overtime to try to get Pete Hegseth. The media is breathlessly rushing to put a microphone in front of every single disgruntled former Pentagon employee who has been fired by this Secretary. You know, it doesn't matter what you are fired for; all that matters to the media and the RINOs is that they have something to say bad about the Secretary of Defense. It is clear as day that these efforts to embarrass Hegseth are nothing more than desperate attempts to salvage reputations and distract from the successes he is already having in the Pentagon.

The truth is, Hegseth inherited a complete, absolute mess at the DOD. The Pentagon has failed audits 7 years in a row. You know, if a business did that, they would go under. But in our government, that is just par for the course.

And thanks to the Biden administration's horrible withdrawal from Afghanistan, countries who hate us like China, Iran, and Venezuela have been emboldened. Instead of working to deter World War III, however, Joe Biden's Pentagon was more focused on social justice.

In 2024, the Biden Defense Department requested more than \$114 million for DEI initiatives, 114 million. Meanwhile, recruitment was at a historic low and falling. Military readiness was slipping, and the world saw a weakened United States.

Pete Hegseth made it clear that he is here to reverse course and that changes that he has made are already visible to the positive. Secretary Hegseth has already eliminated more than 200 diversity and inclusion positions and cut more than 580 million in wasteful grants and contracts—580 million.

Secretary Hegseth has made it clear that he is focused on warfighting, readiness—mission-focused, not political correctness or appeasing the woke mob. He has restored merit-based promotions, refocused leadership training on battlefield effectiveness, terminated taxpayer-funded abortions for military personnel, and reinstalled discipline as a cornerstone of the United States of America military.

This isn't just talk either. The Department is actively removing woke DEI materials from service academies and replacing them with warfighting-centric curriculums.

He also cut through bloated procurement delays and brought transparency to the defense budget. What a novel concept is actually knowing what your budget is.

You know, just 4 months in, DOD has achieved 100 percent operational control of the border. This was after the Biden administration said for 4 years, hey, there was nothing they could do to secure the border. Well, what a joke.

Under Secretary Hegseth's leadership, the Department has moved to re-

duce acquisition timelines, fast track critical update systems, and is making sure the United States is ready to compete and win wars in the 21st century. And construction on the historic Golden Dome, by the way, is well underway.

But it is not just about equipment; Pete has doubled down on his support for the warfighter by improving access to mental health services and other resources that boost morale and readiness. It was much needed.

He reinstated the servicemembers who were wrongfully removed over their personal decision to not take the COVID-19 vaccine—many of them. He has reinstated quite a few. The fact that President Biden and Secretary Austin dismissed these servicemembers was absolutely dead wrong, and I am glad that President Trump's administration has taken quick action to right this wrong.

You know, when I met with Pete during his confirmation process, I told him plainly: Don't go to Washington to make friends, but go there and fight for the warfighter. So far, he has kept his promise.

I can't speak for everyone, but I know the folks I have talked to back in my State of Alabama are very appreciative. We need a Secretary of Defense who is focused on one thing and one thing only, defending America, and that is what Pete Hegseth is doing. And he will tell you this: There is no second place in war. We have to be ready at all times.

You know, under the Biden administration, 13 American troops lost their lives because of poor planning in Afghanistan. We all know that. We have seen it. We saw it pretty much live.

Under President Trump and Hegseth, we have executed successful strikes against terrorist Houthis that have resulted in critical shipping lanes being reopened. We have to get our shipping lanes open because it is costing this country millions and millions of dollars, and world leaders across the country are begging for this to happen.

Pete Hegseth didn't sign up to be liked by the DC cocktail circuit. You know, he committed to making the military great again, and that is exactly what he is doing.

The swamp doesn't like people it can't control, but America loves its leaders who tell the truth and fight for what matters. Pete Hegseth is one of those leaders. So let's be clear: Pete is not the problem. A lot of the media think Pete Hegseth is a problem. He is not the problem; he is the solution to the problem we have had.

And while the swamp keeps losing its ever-loving mind because we have leaders who are actually putting America first again, Secretary Hegseth will keep marching forward, focused on the only thing that matters: making our military the strongest, fiercest, and most respected fighting force in the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

#### NOMINATION OF FRANK BISIGNANO

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise to urge my colleagues to reject Frank Bisignano's nomination to be the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

The first 100 days of Donald Trump's second term have been filled with chaos and cruelty that have reached into every corner of American life. Perhaps no development has been as alarming to the elderly and other concerned Americans as the attacks of the Trump administration on Social Security.

Social Security has long been considered the third rail of American politics. It is simply too important to American workers who spent their lives paying into the program out of every paycheck for politicians to idly propose major changes that would harm the earned benefits of Americans. Yet Donald Trump and his billionaire allies have decided that they are simply immune to the concerns of American citizens. They are about to find out just how wrong they are.

Over the past several months, the Trump administration has attacked nearly every aspect of Social Security. First, it was Americans' sensitive private information protected by Social Security. Then it was scheduling field offices for closure across the country. Then it was eliminating phone service for many Social Security claims.

Worst of all, there is a widespread view among Donald Trump's top lieutenants, from Elon Musk to Howard Lutnick, that Social Security is just chock-full of fraudsters. The whiplash caused by day after day of all the disruption and chaos has resulted in bedlam at Social Security, and, in my view, it has put the earned benefits of millions of Americans in jeopardy.

Mr. President, I wish I could stand in the Senate today and say the cavalry is coming; the chaos will soon be over. But I am afraid that is not the case.

If Frank Bisignano is confirmed, he is going to bring more of the chaos, lies, and callous disregard for Americans who count on Social Security that the Trump administration has brought to the Agency through DOGE. That was front and center when the nominee came before the Finance Committee in March.

That was front and center when the nominee came before the Finance Committee in March. Just before the hearing, I received a very valuable statement from a whistleblower, a former senior official at Social Security. The whistleblower stated that Mr. Bisignano had been deeply involved in the DOGE chaos at Social Security. The whistleblower said:

I am concerned that the President's nominee to be Commissioner of Social Security, Frank Bisignano, will not temper the crisis but rather bolster it.

The allegations presented by the whistleblower center around Elon Musk's DOGE and their attempts to access Social Security databases that