

UKRAINE

Yesterday, Ukrainian forces carried out one of the most significant attacks against military targets of the entire Ukrainian war.

The single best thing President Trump can do to strengthen Ukraine's hand right now is to show that the United States stands firmly behind them and squarely against Russia. But so far, Trump has not done that.

Putin is a clear villain and a bully. So where is Donald Trump's backbone? Where is his conviction? Where is that toughness he likes to project? Frankly, Senators from both sides of the aisle are getting tired of Donald Trump's wishy-washy approach to Putin. If Donald Trump won't stand up to him, the Senate must.

I support legislation by Senators BLUMENTHAL and GRAHAM that would land a hammerblow of sanctions in a tougher way than we ever have done before against Russia. And 80 Senators from both sides of the aisle, including Leader THUNE and myself, cosponsor this bill. Both sides should quickly finish negotiating any necessary changes to the bill, and then we should put this sanctions bill on the floor for a vote as soon as possible. It is very much needed, and it is needed now.

But then we must do more. The administration should turn over every stone to identify more air defense systems that we or our allies can send Ukraine, including ammunition for its Patriot systems. This will save civilian lives.

And the United States should keep going and give more drone and counterdrone support and greater intel sharing. These are things the administration could start doing right now.

BUDGET RECONCILIATION

On reconciliation, what Senate Republicans will try to do this month is a travesty. They are picking up right where House Republicans left off—trying to ram through this Chamber Donald Trump's so-called Big Beautiful Bill.

As the Senate returns to session, we do not yet have a text for the Republicans' megabill. But make no mistake—the fight against this bill is ramping up today. It starts with Senate Democrats showing the American people what the bill actually is: "One Ugly Bill"—one of the most reckless, odious, and self-serving pieces of legislation we have seen in a long time.

Today, I want to share broadly how Senate Democrats will fight this bill with every fiber of our being. It is going to be a long and drawn-out fight. But the American people deserve to see precisely how cruel, how vindictive, how ugly this big bill truly is.

Case in point: House Republicans tucked into their bill a nasty provision that will restrict the power of judges to hold government officials in contempt. It is very clear what is going on here. Republicans want to codify into law Donald Trump's attack against our judicial system. They want to make our

courts toothless by nullifying their contempt powers and make it easier for the Trump administration to ignore the courts. This is nothing less than a naked attack against the separation of powers.

If Senate Republicans include this authoritarian provision in their bill, Democrats will fight it tooth and nail. We will not stand by while Republicans try to sabotage our courts. I fervently believe their effort will not win the day.

Yesterday, I also spoke with Leader JEFFRIES about how both Chambers can work together to fight back against this bill. This Wednesday, Senator KLOBUCHAR and I have also invited House Democratic ranking members to meet with our caucus and share firsthand insight from their fight in the House, including key Republican faultlines.

In all likelihood, this bill will continue to undergo changes and get sent back to the House. For that reason, Democratic unity will be our strongest weapon as we defend the American people from harms contained in the bill.

Our fight in the coming weeks, of course, is not just procedural. It is going to happen on every front—in committees and public hearings, in the Byrd bath, online, in public, and here on this floor.

The Republican plan is very simple: sell out working and middle-class Americans to line the pockets of the ultra, ultrawealthy and well-connected.

Let's talk about the deficit. For years, Republicans screamed about fiscal responsibility. But now Republicans are backing a bill that could add over \$50 trillion to the national debt over 30 years. Even Elon Musk said this bill is a bad idea. That should tell you something.

And most cravenly of all, Republicans are cooking the books so they can pretend their tax breaks won't impact the debt. Republicans are planning to use the Budget chair's section 312 authority under the Congressional Budget Act in an unprecedented and illegitimate manner to run roughshod over the Byrd rule.

The bottom line is this: Republicans' "One Ugly Bill" is a farce. It is betraying our values; it is a threat to working families; and it is a giveaway to the very few at the expense of the many.

Senate Democrats will fight this bill in committee, on the floor, and in the court of public opinion every step, every day, and every possible way.

I believe to my core that the American people, when they truly know what this bill is all about—if they see how shamelessly it enriches the wealthy and everyone else—the American people will reject it outright.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 119.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Michelle Bowman, of Kansas, to be Vice Chairman for Supervision of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 119, Michelle Bowman, of Kansas, to be Vice Chairman for Supervision of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of four years.

John Thune, Dan Sullivan, John Barasso, Mike Rounds, Todd Young, Cynthia M. Lummis, Tom Cotton, James Lankford, Bernie Moreno, John R. Curtis, Ted Budd, Mike Crapo, Katie Boyd Britt, Jim Banks, Markwayne Mullin, Jon Husted, Steve Daines.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 129.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Edward Walsh, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 129, Edward Walsh, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ireland.

John Thune, Pete Ricketts, John Barasso, Tim Sheehy, Bernie Moreno, Steve Daines, Eric Schmitt, Roger Marshall, Tommy Tuberville, John Hoeven, Marsha Blackburn, Bill Cassidy, John R. Curtis, Jim Justice, James E. Risch, Thom Tillis, Markwayne Mullin.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 144.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of James O'Neill, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Calendar No. 144, James O'Neill, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services.

John Thune, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Todd Young, Ron Johnson, Marsha Blackburn, Katie Boyd Britt, Cynthia M. Lummis, James Lankford, Markwayne Mullin, John Barasso, Tommy Tuberville, Ted Budd, Chuck Grassley, Bill Cassidy, David McCormick.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum call with respect to the Duffey nomination.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

(The remarks of Ms. KLOBUCHAR pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 259 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Senator from Texas.

BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, before we left last week for the recess, of course, the House did what it was supposed to do by passing President Trump's Big Beautiful Bill. This, of course, is the way we are going to prevent a multitrillion-dollar tax increase on the American people, something they can least afford on top of 4 years of Bidenomics that resulted in a 20-percent increase in the cost of everything because of runaway inflation.

But this is the vehicle that we will use not only to extend the President's tax provisions but to prevent the largest tax increase in American history and to do some other very important things that I am going to talk about momentarily.

Those who follow Senate procedure, which have to be a very small number of people in the United States, know that our job now is to work with the Parliamentarian on what is known as the Byrd bath because the rules that apply in the House are different than those that apply here in the Senate. So the parties will be making their arguments to the Parliamentarian on what survives the so-called Byrd bath, named after Robert C. Byrd, the famous West Virginia Senator and parliamentary expert. But that is a unique rule here in the Senate. So that is really the next step for people who are watching at home, wondering what in the world is happening up here in Washington, DC.

Reconciliation, which is the process we are going through, of course, is a unique vehicle—maybe not unique. It is a special vehicle, though, because it doesn't require 60 votes in the Senate to get legislation passed. But the Byrd rule is in place to make sure that we don't use this special vehicle to do things that otherwise would require 60 votes and broader bipartisan support. So that is why it exists, and that is why we will be going through that process.

But the budget resolution, of course, has instructed both the House and the Senate committees to spend money in some instances—for example, the Judiciary Committee in the House, Homeland Security, and the Armed Services Committee—to actually spend money to bolster our defense and border security—something that, if we did not do, we would be in a world of hurt, even though, frankly, with President Trump now in office, the border crossings have dropped precipitously, about 95 percent.

But still, both ICE, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, and the Department of Homeland Security need additional resources for detention facilities

and personnel, or else they will run out of money.

But one of the most important things that we need to do in this budget reconciliation process is to finally—finally—come to grips with our national debt. We are approaching \$37 trillion in debt, which is more money than any human being can actually imagine. But here is something that I have always recalled that sort of brings it home to me: We are now spending more money on interest on the national debt than we are to defend our Nation, which is the No. 1 job of the Federal Government.

Of course, as I have said many times from the floor and as any Senator knows, the world is the most dangerous it has been at any time since World War II. You look at what is happening in North Korea, with North Korea providing troops to the Russians to defeat the Ukrainians. You see, obviously, Iran enriching uranium and providing drones to Russia for the battle in Ukraine. You see President Xi in the Indo-Pacific, threatening to take Taiwan by 2027. And then you see what is happening in the Middle East, with Hamas and Israel and the Iranian proxies, whether it is the Houthis in Yemen or Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Gaza.

The world is a very, very dangerous place, and the fact of the matter is, we are on an unsustainable course. We cannot protect the Nation, and we cannot establish deterrents so that our young men and women never have to fight in wars without making the appropriate investments in our national security. And we simply cannot do that on the current trajectory we are on and with the debt now approaching \$37 trillion. The fact of the matter is, we really haven't tried very hard in the past.

And as the Presiding Officer knows, as a member of the Appropriations Committee, the Appropriations Committee, which handles the amount of money that we spend on an annual basis, only deals with about 28 percent of what the Federal Government spends. The rest of that money—the 72 percent—comes from mandatory spending programs and things like the Tax Code because the Tax Code has actually become a means whereby we actually spend money, as well through tax credits and the like.

The Federal Government spends roughly \$6.7 trillion a year, and we are never going to balance the budget just looking at 28 percent of Federal spending, which is what we do through discretionary spending. And, now, that means this is our opportunity—maybe, a once-in-a-generation opportunity—to begin to chip away at that national debt.

If anything should get our attention, the recent credit ratings from Moody's underscores the importance of including these reforms in this particular legislation. Moody's recently downgraded its rating of U.S. credit from Aaa to Aa1, and they pointed to our national