

important than our political stripes, than loyalty to our party's leader or our party's ideas.

At some point tonight, a Republican has to come down to this floor. At some point this weekend, some of our Republican colleagues have to speak out on behalf of this fundamental American idea, on behalf of the U.S. Senate, on behalf of our colleague.

We can still fight on tax policy and immigration policy. We can have big disagreements about the reconciliation bill. It will not harm my Republican colleagues' ability to render argument on the things that matter to them.

It is OK for us to agree that what happened to ALEX PADILLA 2 hours ago crosses a line. It doesn't compromise my Republican colleagues' integrity as Republicans to decide that there is still right or wrong; that not everything is black or white; that two plus two sometimes has to still equal four.

What happened to Senator PADILLA should not have happened. He identified himself. It is not true that he didn't identify himself. What happened to him in the room is not justifiable; but, certainly, what happened to him outside of the room isn't justifiable. Once he was removed from the room, being thrown to the ground as he is identifying himself as a Senator, being handcuffed can't be justified.

So we are going to hang around on this floor in hopes that, at some point, somehow—and I know not all of our Republican colleagues are still in town—they speak up on behalf of this basic premise, this basic foundational idea of America: that even when protest rubs you the wrong way, even when you don't like the form or substance of it, that we are no longer the country that we love, the country that we teach our kids about, if we don't find a way to come together to object to protest being met with this kind of violence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. President, a little more than a couple of hours ago, my friend and colleague Senator ALEX PADILLA attended a press conference in the Federal building in Los Angeles being held by the Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem. Instead of treating him with respect, instead of answering his questions, he was grabbed by her security detail, he was physically forced from the room, forced to the ground, his arms pinned behind his back.

This assault on a Member of the U.S. Senate is unlike anything I have ever seen, perhaps unlike anything anyone in this Chamber has ever seen, and it crystallizes the threat posed to our country and its democracy. If the administration can so mistreat a Member of this body, what can it do to every other American? What can it do to

every other resident of the United States of America? What can it do to you? What can it do to your neighbor and to your community?

The abusive treatment of Senator ALEX PADILLA, however, did not take place in isolation. It took place at a time of heightened tension in Los Angeles and around the Nation.

Earlier this week, I returned from my home in Los Angeles, a city in which thousands have peacefully protested the administration's harsh immigration policies and in which the President has ordered the mobilization of thousands of National Guardsmen and hundreds of marines in order to deal with a few hundred vandals and miscreants that local law enforcement was more than capable of subduing.

And the question is, Why? Why order in the military if they are not necessary? Why order in the military over the objection of local and State officials? Why go to the expense? Why go to the trouble? Why undertake such an obvious provocation? Why, in a city of over 500 square miles, did Donald Trump believe it was necessary to escalate so dramatically over the vile acts of a small number of people in the space of a few blocks?

These are some of the questions I imagine that ALEX PADILLA wanted to ask the Secretary of Homeland Security.

But now, today, we must add one more question: Why would they treat Senator ALEX PADILLA with such forceful and disgraceful disregard, forcing him to the ground? Why?

And the answer involves failure and distraction and disrespect and disregard—failure of the President's immigration protocol, failure of his economic policy, a desire to distract from these failures, disrespect of our military and its role in civil society, and disregard of our democracy and the principles upon which our Nation was founded.

Let's start with failure: the failure of Donald Trump's immigration policy; the failure, in particular, of his promise to deport massive numbers of violent criminals, a failure that was inevitable because it was based on a lie, a foundational lie—foundational to his campaign and to his Presidency—the original lie of the Trump campaign, the one he spoke as he descended the golden escalator in 2015 and suggested to the American people that most of the folks coming to this country as immigrants and migrants were murderers and rapists and violent criminals bent on doing harm to the American people, that foreign nations had opened their prisons and let out their worst offenders so that they could come to the United States and destroy our way of life.

It was a big lie. It was an audacious lie but a lie that the President hoped he could ride, a wave of fear that he could in turn ride into office.

The truth, of course, is the vast number of people coming to this country

are peaceful, hard-working people who want nothing more than an opportunity to get ahead, to enjoy a good life, and to provide for themselves and for their family.

The American people understood this, but they also understood that our border was broken, that our system was chaotic, that the immigration system was itself broken, that asylum cases took too long to adjudicate, and people waiting lawfully to immigrate should be given priority over those who do not.

As President, Donald Trump promised his focus would be on the deportation of violent criminals, but he also promised mass deportations. And the only way to square that conflict between the very specific and the very broad was to go back to that original lie that all immigrants are violent criminals who mean us harm.

If you can make the country believe that, you don't have to be targeted in your immigration raids, you don't have to go through the painstaking work of tracking down people with criminal records who don't want to be found. If you believe the lie that all immigrants are violent criminals, then you can do broad immigration sweeps at restaurants or on farms, in garment factories or high school graduations, in random neighborhoods and homes, or at the Home Depot.

"Just go out there and arrest illegal aliens," the President's Deputy Chief of Staff, a frustrated Stephen Miller, demanded after berating Department officials for the slow pace of their operations. Three thousand arrests a day the administration insisted on as a new quota, and gone was any pretense of looking for violent offenders.

And so the indiscriminate raids and the indiscriminate cruelty began to multiply, picking up people who show up for immigration appointments or to take the oath of citizenship, only to deport them; separating fathers from their sons and daughters, mothers from their children, husbands from their wives; a farmworker who worked in the fields for decades—hard work, back-breaking work, work in the heat and the cold, work during a deadly pandemic when others stayed home, work that most U.S. citizens do not want to do and will not do—chased through the fields that they harvested to be taken away from their families; a mother chased down the street by hooded ICE agents, away from her terrified and screaming teenage daughter.

Americans did not vote for this, do not want this. And in the midst of this, the American people started to speak out—at first, in small ways, in private conversations, after the deportation of their neighbors; and then in more public ways, at townhalls and in letters to the editor, on social media, and in gatherings at their schools; and then, as the raids increased in their scope and the scope of their cruelty, by taking to the streets, as is our God-given right and also a right given by our Constitution.

Some of those protests have taken place in Los Angeles, where Angelenos gathered to speak out against these actions, against the separation of families and the injury to our communities and our economy.

And in the midst of these protests, some number of agitators were attracted by the conflict and saw it as an opportunity to vandalize, assault law enforcement, and engage in other reprehensible conduct. Like moths to a flame, every city has these miscreants, and so does Los Angeles. They care not about immigration policy or immigrants or migrants who are affected, and our State and local law enforcement are more than capable of dealing with them—and they did.

But amidst the failure of his immigration policies and the backlash, Donald Trump saw an opportunity. His economic policy was in tatters. His tariffs were not improving our trade with other nations and instead were prompting the boycott of American goods by close allies like Canada and causing layoffs at American ports, higher prices at Target and Walmart and elsewhere.

He had to fend off Amazon plans to include a line item for the Trump tariff tax on each transaction, which would have made it even more obvious to the American people that he was betraying the central promise of his campaign: to bring prices down when they are going up.

And his Big Beautiful Bill was in trouble over a big, ugly pricetag. Far from reducing the debt or the deficit, the bill was revealed to cost taxpayers a whopping \$2.4 trillion added to the national debt. He was borrowing the money from our kids and our grandkids to fund a tax cut for himself and his rich friends.

Even the world's richest man and, heretofore, the President's biggest benefactor, Elon Musk, called the bill a "disgusting abomination" and made it clear that Republicans should be ashamed of voting for it.

And the opportunity Donald Trump saw in all this failure was this: Call in a distraction. Call in the troops. Call in the marines—not to save a city but to save himself from drowning in failure. And so he did: 4,000 troops from California's National Guard and 700 from the Marines.

And the reaction in Los Angeles, of course, was the one that he desired: escalation, not deescalation; more conflict, not less; more chaos—and the kind of chaos he thrives on, the kind of chaos where the insurrectionist-come-President, the man who, on his first day, pardoned hundreds of criminals who beat police officers, could somehow try to reclaim the mantle of a law-and-order President.

It has not worked. It will not work. Americans have a long memory and will not soon forget the images of January 6, when the President sat calmly in the White House dining room, dining on burgers and fries, while our Capitol

Police were under assault. And the same man who called in the Guard to handle a comparatively small number of criminals and vandals in L.A. refused to call in the Guard to stop thousands of them from ransacking this Capitol.

The last time a President called in the National Guard over the objection of the Governor of a State was in 1965, when the segregationist Governor of Arkansas ignored a ruling of the Supreme Court and refused to integrate the schools in that State. Lyndon Johnson did so to avoid violence and to protect the students trying to attend.

Those circumstances could not be more different than today, when our President has called in the Guard knowing it is more likely to provoke violence than to stop it.

"We must reject any thinking of our cities as a 'battlespace' that our uniformed military is called upon to 'dominate,'" a Secretary of Defense once said. "At home," he said, "we should use our military only when requested to do so, on very rare occasions, by state governors."

Those are the words of Donald Trump's Secretary of Defense—not Pete Hegseth, of course, not the FOX News version of a Defense Secretary, and not the Trump Defense Secretary before him or the one before that. No, those were the words of the first Trump Defense Secretary, James Mattis, perhaps the only Trump Cabinet member in his first term or the present term to leave his office with a stronger reputation than before he arrived.

"Militarizing our response," Mattis said, "sets up a conflict . . . a false conflict—between the military and civilian society. It erodes the moral ground that ensures a trusted bond between men and women in uniform and the society they are sworn to protect, and of which they themselves are a part."

"Keeping public order," he said, "rests with civilian state and local leaders who best understand their communities and are answerable to them."

Now, in California, we love our National Guard. We revere them, as we do the Marines. The Guard is always there when we need them, during fires and floods, after devastating earthquakes. They serve us at home and abroad, always protecting our interests, our lives, our homes, and our freedom.

There is a bond between us, a bond of respect, affection, and trust that must not be broken. Donald Trump does not understand this. He cannot understand it any more than he can understand why people choose a life of military service.

The man who once called soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who fight and have died on our Nation's behalf "suckers and losers" could not possibly understand. Nor does he care about misusing them if it suits his personal or political interest as his partisan, disrespectful and inflammatory speech

at Fort Bragg makes clear, as does his commandeering of the military for a costly parade to celebrate his birthday this weekend.

Now, there is a birthday worth celebrating this weekend, but it is not the President's. That is the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army, an Army that my father was very proud to serve in.

We can and should honor the Army. But a celebration of the vanity of a President who does not himself celebrate the military but only his control over it, that is not a cause for celebration.

Our Founders understood the need to insulate the military from internal domestic affairs, from the raucous and often divisive nature of the political process dominated by party or faction.

For centuries, too, so has this Congress, prohibiting the use of the military for domestic law enforcement purposes, except for narrow—very narrow—circumstances of rebellion and insurrection.

This is vital not only for the protection of the country from a man who would abuse the military to become a King but also to protect the military from the lack of trust that would accompany its subversion to a partisan end.

Our country is approaching its 250th birthday. It is worth remembering why we chose to separate ourselves from our British masters. The preamble of the Declaration of Independence is familiar to us all in its poetic recitation of truths that are self-evident.

But what has been lost to us over time were the long list of grievances set out in that document, grievances that drove the impetus for revolution:

"The history of the present King of Great Britain," it reads, "is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations," this is what our Founders wrote, "all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States."

The Declaration provides in its list of grievances:

"He has obstructed the Administration of Justice."

"He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people," they enumerated.

"He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone," our Founders charged. "For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world," they objected.

"For depriving us, in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury," they declared.

"For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses," they cited in words all too prescient for today.

"He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our legislatures."

"Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us."

"He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power."

All of these grievances so vivid at the time of the Revolution—our Revolution—are so vivid today. And today they can be distilled into a single image—that of Senator ALEX PADILLA on the ground, face to the ground, and in handcuffs. If you are looking for an image of our democracy in handcuffs, look no further.

America, we have a choice. We can rededicate ourselves to the vision of our Founders, one born of struggle against autocracy, one pledged to a form of self-governance that elevated the people over the powerful, that believed we possessed sufficient virtue to be self-governing, that we did not need to be governed by a despot.

We can rededicate ourselves to that vision or we can continue to travel down our present path of incivility, of division, of might not making right but making wrong, a celebration not of self-governance but of self-destruction.

I believe in this country. I believe we are a great country because we always strive to be a good country. I believe in the country because of good people like ALEX PADILLA—wonderful people, beautiful people, courageous people, patriotic people.

ALEX PADILLA's story is the story of all of us, the story of what is possible in this country. He is a good and decent man. He is a great and capable Senator. He deserved better than what he got in that Federal building in Los Angeles. The American people deserve better than what he got in the Federal building in Los Angeles.

Let us remember ourselves. Let us remember who we are. We are the country of Jefferson and of Lincoln and of Washington. We are the country of John Lewis, and we are the country of giants.

We stand on their shoulders. We owe our life, our liberty, the opportunity to pursue happiness to their brilliant legacy.

We have come to the rescue and liberation of other worlds, of other parts of this globe. We have fought for democracy. We have championed democracy and human rights. We believed in treating others as we would treat ourselves. This is who we are.

ALEX PADILLA face down in a Federal building, forced to the ground by agents of the Secretary of Homeland Security—this is not who we are.

I can't help but think of the words of my late and wonderful colleague Elijah Cummings because they have always been such a potent reminder: We are better than this. We are better than this. We are not a country that sends the Marines into a city—not to restore order but to create disorder.

We are a better country than that. We are not a country that needs to have a parade honoring our President to showcase our military might on his birthday. We are a better country than this.

There have been giants who have served in our military. There have been giants that have served in this body,

great people. They came from all different backgrounds. And the strength of this country—that is still so possible. You could come from any beginning and end up here. And we have been a country that has welcomed people from around the world because we have understood they bring their genius and their work ethic and their striving with them, and it has lifted our country forward.

We have that beautiful Statue of Liberty not because we disdain immigrants, not because we view them as a threat, but because we celebrate what they have brought to this country. And I think in the last several years, we have forgotten who we are.

Every now and then, we just need to step back from the abyss and remind ourselves of where we came from and that in this greatest Nation on Earth what is possible.

I didn't serve with ALEX PADILLA in the State legislature, and I didn't get to serve with him or really get to know him well until I came to this body. And I told my colleagues when I got here: You all are wonderful people, but nobody—nobody—did better than I did in whom I got as my seatmate. I mean that with all my heart. He is a good and genuine and decent and capable and brilliant man.

I will never forget that image I saw today because, to me, it is the image of what is best in this country being brought to the ground.

I ask every Member of this body to think about the legacy we have been charged with protecting and what we are going to do from this day forward to make sure that this incredible experiment in self-governance continues and that we never see an act like we saw 2 hours ago take place again in the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

ALEX PADILLA

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I just want to first thank my colleague from California for stating so plainly about the character of the individual we are talking about.

We have justifiable disagreements in this body. We have strong-held beliefs in this body. We have real debates and arguments in this body. But it has been generations and generations and generations since there has been violence in this body.

I stand with my back toward the Chamber where there was the caning of Sumner during the slavery debates, and a House Member came over and beat a U.S. Senator within an inch of his life.

You see, there is this decorum here where we have this mutual respect, and we understand violence is absolutely unacceptable.

And if there is anybody that shows that kind of decency and that kind of peace, my colleague from California

put it so plainly—ALEX PADILLA, like many of my colleagues, even across the aisle—he is one of the people of true character here. I think that is why today has hurt so many of us personally is because of what this breach of this body actually means to all of us.

We know of dangers of violence in a democracy and the insidiousness that violence presents or that fear of violent reprisal presents.

Jefferson said it so eloquently:

When people fear their government, there is tyranny. When the government fears [its] people, there is liberty.

What is so disturbing when you see a Member of this body thrown to the floor, a knee on his shoulder, arms being wrenched behind him after he has identified himself as a U.S. Senator is literally what ALEX PADILLA said.

I am going to pull from what I know he has already said publicly, but this is what he also has written privately.

ALEX PADILLA says:

If [this is] what they do to a . . . Senator with a question, imagine what they [are doing] to farm workers, day laborers, cooks, and [the] other [of the] nonviolent immigrants they are targeting.

You see, ALEX PADILLA knows something about this country, which is that we are all, as Martin Luther King so eloquently wrote in those letters from the Birmingham Jail, when he was jailed for his nonviolent civil disobedience—what ALEX PADILLA knows is what King said so eloquently; that we are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality tied to a common garment of destiny that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere, that when you have a President that so exceeds his constitutional authority, that he begins to do things to infringe upon the fundamental rights and securities of other Americans, it is a threat to all Americans.

This is why right across the way—I can almost see it looking through these windows—why the Supreme Court, with nominees from both parties, with three Donald Trump appointees on it, ruled 9 to 0 in support of the due process rights of someone in our country that was not even a citizen of this Nation—because in the Constitution, using the words “any Person,” knowing that if you erode the due process rights of anybody in this Nation, it is a threat to the due process rights of everyone in this Nation.

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Understand what we saw today: A U.S. Senator forcibly removed from a room in a Federal building—a Federal official forcibly removed from a Federal building after he identified himself as a U.S. Senator. But after he was out of that building, they did not stop there. They drove our colleague to his knees and then forcibly shoved him upon his face, wrenched his arms behind him, and ALEX PADILLA writes: If they do that me, what are they doing to farmworkers and cooks and domestics?