

That is not how we should run this democracy. That is not how the Founders of this country wrote the Constitution. They didn't even think there would be political parties. They felt that it was very important for Congress to be able to be the backstop at a moment when, for whatever reason, a President made a decision that didn't serve the American people properly or well.

If we can't overcome this veto, I think it would say that no bill is safe and that the efforts of every single elected Member of Congress would now be at risk to one person's view and one person's decision.

Later today, I am pleased to say the House is considering whether to override the President's veto. They are putting it on the floor of the House.

I congratulate the work of Congresswoman BOEBERT and Congressman HURD and the rest of the Colorado House delegation to work with the Speaker to get this on the floor of the House. It is absolutely critical for the people of Colorado that Congress act, that we support, once again, the Arkansas Valley Conduit, which we have unanimously.

Next week, this bill will come over to the Senate floor. I urge every single Member of the Senate to do what you did the last time, which is to support with your vote the 50,000 farmers and ranchers in southeastern Colorado who need the benefit of this clean water.

They are not asking, by the way, for a handout here. They have done their part, generation, after generation, after generation, to keep this project alive. They have done their part to get a unanimous vote in the House of Representatives and on the floor of this Senate to be able to keep their faith with their children and their grandchildren. The least we can do in this Senate is to uphold the work that they have done and also the Constitution of the United States of America.

I hope every person in this room will use this as an opportunity to stand with the people in southeastern Colorado; to stand with our Constitution; and to make sure that we all—all—take seriously the legislative responsibility we have as an independent branch of government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

VENEZUELA

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I rise today because the United States, once again, stands on the brink of a dangerous and unnecessary war, one that neither the American people nor the elected representatives whom they sent here to Washington have authorized and one that risks yet another endless conflict that will drain our coffers and cost American lives.

President Trump took military action against Venezuela without the express consent of Congress. The Constitution is clear: The power to declare war belongs to the people through their

elected Representatives in Congress. That authority is not optional; it is not symbolic. It is actually a pillar of democratic accountability when it comes to matters of war and peace, to life and death.

The Senate has now spoken with a clear bipartisan voice: Trump must end his dangerous and illegal military action in Venezuela now. This Senate must speak with a bipartisan voice, especially if there is no prior congressional authorization. It must stop today.

If the Trump administration believes military force against Venezuela is necessary, the Constitution provides a clear and lawful path forward: go to Congress and make the case to the American people. If President Trump cannot make that case, then he has no business launching military strikes, killing civilians, and putting American servicemembers in harm's way.

Even after yesterday's classified briefing from "Secretary of War Crimes" Pete Hegseth, we all left with far more questions than answers: What will this unending occupation cost the American people? Why did the administration, led by Secretary Rubio, lie about regime change? Which is next: Greenland? Cuba? Colombia? Mexico?

But one answer is perfectly clear: the answer to the question of why Trump and Rubio did this. It is obvious. This is not a war for the Venezuelan people. It is not a war for democracy. This is an illegal war for oil. It is a coup for crude on behalf of big oil companies in our country. It is just like "The Godfather Part I." Trump made Venezuela an offer it couldn't refuse. Capturing Maduro is the head in the bed. We are holding their country hostage for the foreseeable future until Venezuela gives up its resources. We are stealing their oil at gunpoint.

Trump told Big Oil CEOs that he would help them if they paid his campaign \$1 billion just a year ago, and he has already given them countless tax breaks and nearly unlimited access to our public lands and waters, killing wind, killing solar, killing all-electric vehicles, killing anything that gets in the way of the agenda of the oil and natural gas industry in our country, and now—now—he is giving them Venezuela. We know he told oil execs before and after the invasion about his plans for Venezuela, not Members of Congress and not the American people.

He said to the oil companies: Get ready. Something is going to happen.

So the oil companies knew, but the American people did not. The President would not brief the U.S. Senate before the invasion. Secretary Rubio said that you can't trust the U.S. Senate, but they trusted oil companies to know; that they should get ready and that something was going to happen. On top of that, he is promising these very same oil companies that stand to get rich by selling the oil that they will get reimbursed by the American taxpayers whom they already charge through the nose for their products.

This war is not for the American people. It is for oil CEOs to profit off of instead of the American people. Chevron's stock? It is up. Americans' stock? It is down. Their bill will be paid by everyday Americans during the days to come as Trump tries to get us in a new war without end.

The Trump administration must immediately halt further military strikes in Venezuela, whether it is at sea or on land, and come to Congress if it believes force is justified. If President Trump cannot make his case to the American people and our elected representatives, then he has no business using military force and putting American servicemembers in harm's way.

So it is absolutely imperative that the Members of the U.S. Senate go on record. We are going to uphold our constitutional obligation before we commit our military to further operations in Venezuela. We must put them on record before they commit our military in Greenland. We must put them on record on the Republican side before our troops—our military—are committed in Cuba or in Colombia or in Mexico. This body must go on record. We must reclaim our constitutional prerogatives that are built into article I of the U.S. Constitution. That is the job which we must do, and that is what the American people expect from us.

Mr. President, I want to thank Dan Ohlstein for all of the great service which he has given to our country.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote that was scheduled for 1:45 be moved up to 1:30, right now.

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

VOTE ON VAN HOOK NOMINATION

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Van Hook nomination?

Mr. WARNER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 40, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 6 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Banks	Britt	Collins
Barrasso	Budd	Cornyn
Blackburn	Capito	Cotton
Boozman	Cassidy	Crapo

Cruz	Justice	Murkowski
Curtis	Kaine	Paul
Durbin	Kennedy	Ricketts
Ernst	King	Risch
Fischer	Klobuchar	Rounds
Graham	Lankford	Schmitt
Grassley	Lee	Shaheen
Hagerty	Lummis	Sheehy
Hassan	Marshall	Sullivan
Hawley	McConnell	Thune
Hoeben	McCormick	Tillis
Husted	Moody	Welch
Hyde-Smith	Moreno	Young
Johnson	Mullin	

NAYS—40

Alsobrooks	Hickenlooper	Sanders
Baldwin	Hirono	Schatz
Bennet	Kelly	Schiff
Blumenthal	Kim	Schumer
Blunt Rochester	Lujan	Slotkin
Booker	Markey	Smith
Cantwell	Merkley	Van Hollen
Coons	Murphy	Warner
Cortez Masto	Murray	Warnock
Duckworth	Ossoff	Warren
Fetterman	Padilla	Whitehouse
Gallago	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	
Heinrich	Rosen	

NOT VOTING—7

Cramer	Scott (FL)	Wicker
Daines	Scott (SC)	
Moran	Tuberville	

The nomination was confirmed.

(Mr. MORENO assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

GREENLAND

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, as we are starting this new year, there is certainly no shortage of issues to be talking about. You and I have been engaged in fruitful discussions, I believe, about how we address health coverage for millions of Americans that are looking at dramatically higher costs, in many cases, and recognizing that there is a pretty short window here in front of us. In fact, for many, it feels like that window is already closed. We have work to do on that account.

We certainly have work to do on the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2026. We have got a looming deadline of January 30 that is fast approaching. And I think it is good news that we will be able to begin that process to advance this next minibus, these three bills—my Interior subcommittee appropriations as well as CJS, and Energy and Water—be able to advance those.

But then we have to get moving on the fiscal year 2027 cycle. We are already, technically, behind on that. So we have got efforts there.

We obviously need to do more when it comes to the situation around the world.

We just had a vote on a motion to discharge a War Powers Resolution as it relates to Venezuela. We need to strengthen sanctions on Russia, which continues to prosecute this awful war against Ukraine. We need to do more.

We need to work together to reach a bipartisan agreement on permitting re-

form. We seem to make good forward progress and then take a few steps back. But we need that to build out the infrastructure that this country needs.

We know we all need to tackle the affordability issues that impact all of us, whether they relate to the costs of goods or housing.

There is a lot that we have to do here, but there is one thing that we should not be doing, one thing that we should not be spending our time doing, and that is an effort—any effort—that would seek to annex Greenland, whether it is taking it by force, taking it by coercion, taking it by pressure or threat, or, really, in fairness, any related method. It is not an issue that I would have ever expected to raise here on the floor of the Senate.

In my time here in the Senate, over the past two decades, I have immersed myself in all things Arctic. I have strong relationships with friends across the Arctic and in Greenland, specifically. I have been the cochair of the Arctic Parliamentarians Conference for years now, and my cochair is a strong Greenlandic woman, who I just spoke with this morning about the situation and the rhetoric that is coming out of Washington, DC, directed toward her country.

It is an issue that is not necessarily new to Congress—the U.S. interest in Greenland. In fairness, there have been discussions prior to the first Trump administration. It was actually back in 1867. This was when the United States bought Alaska from Russia and, apparently, at that time, Seward made some inquiries. Seward was Secretary of the Interior at the time. He made some inquiries about Greenland, but the Congress wasn't interested in doing anything about it.

And then, in the Taft administration, there was a land swap that was proposed. This was back in 1910. It was rejected by Denmark. And then, apparently, there was actually a formal offer made back in 1946, at the outset of the Cold War, in the Truman administration, where there was actually an outright offer—\$100 million, as I understand it, in gold—to buy Denmark. That is what it was reported as.

That was, again, rejected by Denmark.

But it was at this time where we moved from the discussion about how do we take or how do we buy or how do we trade into one that was based on a relationship and shared mutual interests and national security, and working with Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark to ensure that military assets could be based at Thule, at the time—now called Pituffik—Air Base Station.

Again, these are discussions that have been had in the past—but in the very, very distant past—until just recently, when, again, we have seen comments coming out of the administration and really stepped up in this past week or so.

It is one thing to have a discussion. It is one thing to have a conversation.

But, instead, what we are hearing is some pretty aggressive rhetoric from the Trump administration and some members of Congress. There are statements that we are seeing that are suggesting that not only is a taking by force or coercion or other related method not only an option but perhaps a priority. And that, as a priority for the United States to take Greenland, military action is an option. And that, to me, is profoundly, profoundly troubling.

I think most of us want to be able to just not only quiet that but make clear that is not only not going to happen, but it is an option that has been taken off the table. I wish that I could say we have received that kind of reassurance, but to date, we haven't. We haven't had that assurance.

To be fair, the Secretary of State has recently stated that we are not talking about military intervention, so much as seeking to purchase. Again, in order to purchase something, you have to have a willing buyer and a willing seller. Greenland has made it very, very clear and Denmark has made it very clear that Greenland is not for sale.

As I speak with those whom I have established relationships with across the Arctic and, more specifically, in Greenland, they are sharing with me their concern, their deep anxiety about what is going on. What is it that the United States is asking for?

Think about the 57,000 people who reside in Greenland. That is the total population of this massive, massive island—57,000 people. But those 57,000 people are their own autonomous country. They have been striving for independence and control of their own future for years. Greenland's Prime Minister made a point very clearly recently. He said that “threats, pressures and talk of annexation have no place between friends” and that Greenland's future must be decided by its own people.

We need to take that message seriously. We need to respect the will and the wishes of the people of Greenland. Greenland's future must be decided by its own people.

It is also deeply unsettling if you live in Denmark, which administers defense and foreign policy for Greenland, as a mostly autonomous territory. So those who are not Greenlanders but who live in Denmark are justifiably disturbed and unsettled.

It is deeply unsettling, if you understand the immense value of NATO—of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization—and how one cofounding member taking land from another shatters this crucial alliance forever. We have seen that in statements coming from our NATO allies.

Frankly, this should be unsettling for all of us because, bluntly, there is no need to treat longstanding allies with such a brutal lack of respect. And that is what I believe it is, a lack of respect.

We are not talking to the people of Greenland. We are talking over them.