

in Russia, seems to be repeatedly trying to humiliate the United States and play for time.

The original misstep may have occurred even earlier, when President Trump withdrew the United States from the Iran nuclear agreement during his first term—a deal that was working to restrain Iran's nuclear ambitions. Now we seem to be floundering back into a much weaker deal, one that bewilderingly includes billions of dollars to help Iran rebuild.

I hope wiser heads will prevail, and I look forward to congressional review of any ensuing deal with Iran, as required under the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BARASSO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING LINDSEY GRAHAM

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, my prayers and those of my family are with Senator GRAHAM's family, staff, and friends after his sudden, sudden passing yesterday. We see the white roses on his desk, and we think of LINDSEY.

Senator GRAHAM devoted much of his life to public service—first in the military and then in Congress, where he represented South Carolina for more than three decades. To the very end, Senator GRAHAM's life was defined by public service. He was an important Member of this institution and a crucial voice for his constituents in South Carolina.

For all of our many and vehement disagreements, Senator GRAHAM and I still found ways to work together. One of the first things we did together was travel to China. We both believed that China was manipulating its currency, hurting American exports, hurting American jobs, and together we hammered away at that issue.

At first, neither the left nor the right believed us. Amazingly enough, both the New York Times, a liberal publication, and the Wall Street Journal, a conservative publication, said there is no such thing as currency manipulation, but GRAHAM and I proved to be correct, and we took some real efforts over the next few years to stop that manipulation and the outflow of American jobs.

We worked together and hashed out a framework for commonsense, comprehensive immigration reform—the so-called Gang of Eight led by myself and Senator McCain and with LINDSEY GRAHAM as a key member. We worked hard. We didn't agree on everything in our bipartisan immigration proposal,

but we agreed it was worth trying because doing nothing was worse. We also found common ground in our effort to aid Ukraine after the Russian invasion.

I know that if Senator GRAHAM were here in the Chamber today, he would also join me in urging the Senate to support Ukraine and strengthen sanctions on Russia. I urge Senator THUNE in honor of LINDSEY to put the Russia sanctions bill on the floor immediately. It will pass overwhelmingly and help our allies in Ukraine.

Not seeing eye to eye is no reason to be blind to the way forward. LINDSEY could understand that. Every Senator ought to do the same.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, now, on the shutdown: Well, somehow, Republicans are even in a bigger mess now than when they left Washington 2 weeks ago. It was hard to make things even worse, especially while we were on the July 4 recess, but they did. Donald Trump is the mastermind at making things worse and worse and worse.

Just this morning, Donald Trump told "FOX & Friends":

Republicans have to [terminate the filibuster]. It's so insane. Otherwise, we're gonna have a shutdown in September.

The Trump shutdown—he is bragging about it; he is predicting it. Republicans have to terminate the filibuster, or we will have a shutdown in September, says Donald Trump.

So it is clear. It is very clear. I know the Senator from Wyoming talks about Democrats wanting a shutdown. Well, he ought to listen to Donald Trump. He is the one who wants it. It is clear, if we head toward a shutdown in September, it will be Trump who is responsible. He is telling the American people he wants a shutdown.

Oh, Donald, do you remember the last time you called for a shutdown, when you challenged NANCY PELOSI and I in the Oval Office and told us you wanted a shutdown? Donald, it didn't work out too well for you then. It won't work out well for you now either.

And to all the Republican Senators, including my good friend from Wyoming, who keep insisting that Democrats are hell-bent on shutting down the government, well, they ought to listen to what their own President is saying. Democrats aren't saying we want a shutdown; Trump is. Donald Trump is saying the quiet part out loud. He has no issue with shutting down the Federal Government to force through his radical agenda.

If Republicans want to clean up their mess, it will require working with Democrats, not seeing us as partisan foes but as fellow Americans. Instead, what are Republicans doing? They are advancing a lopsided, partisan spending bill that would supersize the budget for Trump's disastrous war with Iran without providing cost relief to working families or reining in Donald Trump's corruption. That is unacceptable.

Let's put Republican accusations to rest. Democrats want to fund the gov-

ernment and avoid a shutdown and pass strong, bipartisan appropriations bills that improve people's lives. Democrats believe our budget ought to help families make ends meet. Democrats want a budget that invests in bringing down American costs, not one that burns taxpayer dollars on Donald Trump's reckless war.

Republicans have plenty of time to drop their "my way or the highway" partisan game. Most Republicans know how ridiculous the SAVE Act is, how unconstitutional it probably is. But Trump is still insisting on it because he thinks it is the only way he can win an election is by fixing it, by eliminating tens of millions of people from the voter rolls. And so he says: Unless I get my way—a little temper tantrum here, Donald—I am going to shut down the government. It is something that the American people can see through in a minute, as they can see through the very unpopular SAVE Act.

If Republicans follow Trump over the cliff and insist that the government shut down if they don't get their way, it will be Donald Trump's disaster.

NOMINATION OF TODD BLANCHE

Mr. President, on the Blanche nomination, Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche has spent this confirmation fight doing what he has always done for his client—his No. 1 client—Donald Trump: denying the obvious, defending the indefensible, and lying under oath.

As Attorney General, your No. 1 client should be the United States of America; but here, Blanche, his No. 1 client will be Donald Trump, who has no regard for our Constitution, for our values, for the rule of law, for honesty. Blanche's resume reads like a rap sheet. In his time at the Department of Justice, Blanche has helped the administration defy dozens of court orders blocking their illegal policies. Blanche continues to withhold 3 million pages of the Epstein files and lied under oath to Congress about meeting the Epstein survivors—something they deny.

Blanche was the mastermind behind and the champion of one of the most despicable acts of corruption ever in the American government: the \$2 billion MAGA slush fund to give taxpayer-funded cash payouts to Trump, MAGA billionaires, and January 6 insurrectionists.

Can you imagine having this guy as Attorney General when he came up with this slush fund and propounded it? One of the most corrupt acts anyone has proposed—any Attorney General—and they want to put him in. Oh, my God.

I am pleased a Federal judge rebuked that blatantly corrupt slush fund and sweetheart immunity deal for Trump and his family, but we haven't seen the last of this administration's corruption. Blanche has devoted his career to serving Donald Trump and particularly his corrupt purposes. Blanche has gone after Trump's enemies, covered up Trump's crimes, and shielded Trump from the consequences.

Who does Trump pick in these very important law enforcement offices? People who represented him, people he knows will lie for him. If he becomes Attorney General, Blanche's letterhead might change, but his loyalty to Trump won't. Again, his No. 1 client will be Donald Trump and his lies and not the United States of America. Blanche has already made it clear we can't trust a word that comes out of his mouth. Republicans ought to remember that during the confirmation hearings.

IRAN

Mr. President, on the Iran war, Trump formally notified lawmakers that the Nation is once again at war with Iran. Really? Thanks, Donald. Nobody seemed to know that, did they?

Trump's rinse-and-repeat approach to the Iran war isn't a strategy; it is a recipe for utter disaster. Again, Trump once again gave a 60-day notice that the Nation is once again at war with Iran. His rinse-and-repeat approach isn't a strategy.

We keep moving backward. Gas prices stay high, casualties increase, costs increase. It is incredible what a fiasco this war is.

Trump's so-called understanding—a lot of bull—with Iran fell apart faster than the ink could dry. He doesn't tell us what really the understanding means. We hear plenty of things that the Iranians say were agreed to that are not in the understanding, and America suffers. The same-old cycle repeats itself over and over again: Trump tells us the war is over. Iran tells us it isn't. The missiles start flying. The ships stop moving. The prices jump. And Trump comes back a short time later and tells us the war is over again.

How many more times is this going to go on before Donald Trump realizes he must end this awful war? Does what Trump does come as a surprise—what he has done? No. There is an old saying that no plan survives first contact with the enemy, but Donald Trump didn't even have a plan when he started this war in the first place.

The American people are paying the price for Trump's total failure in Iran. Our servicemembers are in harm's way, working families are forking over a fortune at the gas pump and in the grocery aisle. Americans are sick of seeing Trump burn their tax dollars on his misadventure of epic proportions.

Enough is enough. Trump ought to get serious, double down on negotiations to end this war, and comply with the bipartisan majorities in both the House and Senate who voted to remove our forces from harm's way and end this war.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. LUMMIS). The Senator from Maryland.

REMEMBERING LINDSEY GRAHAM

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, let me start by expressing my condolences to the family and loved ones of LINDSEY GRAHAM on his sudden passing. While we disagreed more often

than not, we were able to work together over the years on a number of key foreign policy issues, including our mutual support of the Syrian Kurds or the Syrian Democratic Forces who have been our key partners in the fight against ISIS. And I will discuss our work on that and other matters at another time. On the matter before us today, I am sure we would disagree.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Madam President, I rise in strong opposition to the fiscal year 2027 National Defense Authorization Act as it is currently written. This bill lays the groundwork for a bloated Pentagon budget that would further embolden President Trump's reckless and illegal war against Iran.

It represents a huge increase in taxpayer-funded and debt-financed Pentagon spending at a time when families across the country are struggling to afford groceries, rent, gas, and other necessities.

This bill authorizes this whopping increase in funds for the U.S. military, despite the fact that the Department of Defense has never—and I mean never—passed a clean audit. And when we dig deeper into the bill, there are several other new significant provisions that haven't gotten much attention, but they should.

One of them would mandate the establishment of a new United States-Israel Defense Technology Cooperation Initiative. It is a provision which essentially orders the President—orders the executive branch—to expand our technology sharing and defense cooperation with the Government of Israel.

The other new provision would mandate that the President expand and enhance intelligence sharing with the Government of Israel and, at the same time, constrain the President's ability to limit such intelligence sharing with the Government of Israel.

Now, I want my colleagues to think about that for a minute. Even when the Government of Israel may be taking actions that are inconsistent with our interests or values, whether that is now or sometime in the future, this provision requires that the U.S. Government share intelligence information with them.

Now, why in the hell would the U.S. Congress mandate more cooperation with the Government of Israel at a time we cannot even get accountability and justice for nine American citizens who have been killed by Israeli settlers or security forces in the occupied West Bank over the last 4 years? We have been seeking accountability in these killings year after year—no results.

And why would we require—mandate—this cooperation of intelligence sharing when a 20-year-old American citizen student, Sama Safi, is being imprisoned by the Israeli Government on trumped-up political charges as we speak, as we gather here? She has spoken about the abusive conditions she has faced during that imprisonment.

And why would we mandate greater engagement with the Government of Israel while the Israeli Minister of Defense boasts about leveling 90 percent of the homes in southern Lebanon and says the plan is to do to southern Lebanon what Israeli forces did with American weapons in Rafah, which is a city in southern Gaza that was reduced to rubble?

And why would we mandate this increased cooperation in defense and intelligence sharing at a time when violent settlers are running rampant on the West Bank, destroying Palestinian lands, pushing people off of their land and often with the complicity of the IDF? Why would we be doing these things?

The Senate should fully debate and vote on these new proposals before we mandate such major changes in policy. In other words, we, the Senate, should demand transparency and accountability from ourselves, from Senators. Let's debate and vote on these provisions and see where Senators stand.

These provisions are just part of the problem with this deeply flawed bill. This bill allows the Pentagon and military contractors to gorge at taxpayer expense, at the expense of my constituents and people all over this country.

This bill would authorize a \$1.15 trillion national defense budget, which is almost a 30-percent increase from the fiscal year 2026-enacted level; in other words, the current level of funding.

And President Trump is calling for even more. This authorization would increase that funding over current balances by \$500 billion. But as we speak, the House is talking about moving forward with another \$350 billion as part of another reconciliation bill.

And then, on top of that, the Trump administration is asking for another \$87 billion in supplemental funding to pay for their disastrous war against Iran. And let's not forget that the Pentagon got an additional plus-up of \$152 billion from President Trump's so-called Big Beautiful Bill, which was beautiful if you were a billionaire but not for anybody else back in 2025.

If Congress were to appropriate all of these funds, it would exceed \$1.7 trillion paid for by American taxpayers and financed on our national credit card; again, ultimately paid for by our taxpayers.

So how can we possibly move forward with this huge expanse of taxpayer funds for the Pentagon's adventures overseas when the American people are struggling right now paycheck to paycheck here at home?

I talk to my constituents. I know my colleagues do too. Our fellow Americans are fed up—and rightly so—with inflation, the high cost of groceries, exploding healthcare costs, rising housing prices, and huge electric bills as we see more and more data centers being built.

As Americans suffer amid an affordability crisis, this bill—the bill that will be voted on tomorrow in terms of