

This Senate swore an oath to the Constitution. We have an obligation to provide checks and balances, to conduct oversight, to demand transparency, to hold the executive branch accountable when power is abused. Today, we are failing in our constitutional duty. Today, we are failing our democracy. Today, we are failing families that are mourning and grieving.

Look, this is not an immigration speech. It is not a speech about whether we support strong borders. I do, unequivocally and firmly. America must have secure borders. It must enforce its immigration laws. America must protect all of its communities from any threats.

The first words of our founding document talked about forming a government of common defense and the safety and security of our communities. But we can never ever abandon the fundamental precept that this is a democracy, and therefore we must have accountability.

We are not an autocracy. We are not an authoritarian government. We are not a monarchy where we have Kings and Queens above question, above accountability, and above the law.

We are a democracy, and the very mission of this body is to hold the Executive accountable when they are taking Executive action, especially when they are using the greatest power that could be entrusted into a government that is to take lives, to kill people. To minimize that, to watch people die in our streets without accountability or transparency is a direct assault on the foundational ideals of who we are as a people.

"Are we OK," he asks. Are we OK? This is the revolutionary idea of America. No person, not a President, not Senators, not judges, no person is above the law—not a Federal agent in an unmarked car and undistinguished uniform with a gun in their hands firing through a window and killing someone.

Power without accountability is not strength. It is the beginning of tyranny. Every government is asked whether it will preserve the principles it inherited. This is our moment. This is why the Constitution envisioned this body. And yet we are failing in that duty to provide oversight, accountability, checks and balances.

And the consequence is the repeated tragedy within this Agency of seeing people killed on our streets. We owe these families, we owe our democracy an independent investigation. I demand that from my colleagues. I call upon an independent investigation, and I should be joined by a chorus of my colleagues with the conviction that this is not right or left. This is why we were elected in the first place and why we put our hands on our Bible and swore an oath to that Constitution.

I am anguished. I am angry. This is an inflection point in our democracy, another one that seems to be coming with increasing speed and rapidity. We

make this presumption that this Nation sits upon a bedrock that will never crumble.

Well, I am telling you, I am not afraid of any nation outside of our own. What I am afraid of is the corrosive, cancerous corruption of a nation who swears an oath to ideals but does not fulfill them in their duty.

I don't know what to say when we have another dead person, when we are seeing people in our streets, law-abiding, loving their families, and they are asking those questions: Who are we in this Nation?

I pray that this Senate changes course, and instead of silence they answer with a commanding conviction that we are the United States of America. We are a nation of laws; that no one, be they the President, be they a Senator, be they an officer in the street, no one is above the law.

IRAN

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I don't have written remarks for this, but I have been stunned that we here in this Nation are at war. We are unequivocally at war.

And I did write down what I have heard from leaders. Let me quote, on March 9, the President of the United States said:

[T]he war is very complete, pretty much.

On April 7, the Vice President of the United States, JD Vance, our former colleague here in the Senate, said:

[V]ery shortly, this war is going to conclude.

On April 8, Pete Hegseth, the Secretary, said we had "achieved every single objective on plan, on schedule, exactly as laid out from day one."

In June, Secretary Rubio came to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, upon which I sit, and testified under oath declaring that "the war is over."

Yet that same day, we had kinetic exchanges with Iran. June 18, Donald Trump said the United States had "defeated" Iran "totally militarily" and that the memorandum of understanding "probably is unconditional surrender."

Let's fast-forward to July 14: Missiles and drones are still flying. The war is still raging. The President has achieved none of the goals.

I know what has happened though is that we lifted sanctions on Iran. They got billions of dollars of oil sales done. We have seen the greatest energy crisis in my lifetime upending global oil markets, but more important to me, seeing people's gas prices go up but not only their gas prices, what have we seen? We have seen that everything that touches that fuel source, the transportation of goods and services, has made prices go up for families all across our country.

I have seen the suffering, not just of the American people with higher costs but American military who are being held over and over and over, put in harm's way, hundreds injured, 14 dead,

and what have we achieved? The Strait of Hormuz is still closed. The President said that he wanted to deal with the highly enriched material. It is still in country. The President said he wanted regime change. We have a more extreme regime. The President said he was going to get unconditional surrender. They have not unconditionally surrendered. They are firing at our soldiers right now.

Every goal he laid out for a war that he did not come to Congress, as the Constitution says—everything he laid out has not been achieved.

And even the memorandum of understanding that he said was so great had so many holes of Swiss cheese that it fell apart, and here we are back at war.

And what is the President's plan? Can one Senator here say, tell us, what the President of the United States is trying to achieve as we spend billions and billions of dollars a day, a week, in this conflict?

What is he trying to achieve right now? Nobody knows the plan. This is "deja vu all over again," as the great New Jerseyan, Yogi Berra said. This is yet another quagmire in the Middle East with no plan, with no strategy, with no clear objectives, with Americans putting their lives on the line.

And what are we doing here in this body? Nothing. We are going on this week as if this is business as usual. A bunch of us are trying to force more oversight votes or—excuse me—war powers votes.

But this body is doing nothing as a President is spending billions of taxpayer dollars, upending our national economy, putting lives at risk in a war that has achieved nothing but made things worse with the Strait of Hormuz closed.

And what are we doing, Congress? Nothing to check a President that is clearly out of control, who is clearly out of his depth, who is clearly not the great dealmaker because he failed in making deals with Iran before this deal and—even though he claimed to have one—it clearly fell apart.

We have war powers. The Constitution is clear. Yet, you are letting him for month after month after month—since February—conduct a war that is depleting our military reserves, coming at a great cost and sacrifice to military members and their families, and every American is paying the price for it in their everyday costs.

This is outrageous. This is unacceptable. And this body is trying to normalize this: Oh, just another day in America. Well, no, we are at war right now, and we have an obligation to either stand up and vote in favor of that war or stop it.

This is one of the most unimaginable, dystopic realities we are in right now, where the very body that has the power to declare war is not doing anything and letting this President continue to get us into a quagmire. And now he can't even tell us why we are in it, what he is trying to achieve. He is desperately scrambling to get the Strait

of Hormuz open, which was open before he started this war.

This would be funny if it wasn't so tragic, if it wasn't costing so many lives, if it wasn't costing so much of our taxpayers moneys, and if so many Americans weren't hurting as a result of it. Come on, now.

How could we be complicit in this unjust war that has no clear objectives and that nobody could articulate a strategy to achieve any objective or get us out, conducted by a President who has lost all authority as our Commander in Chief because of his blunder and mistake and lack of strategy and lack of forethought?

And the very body that was put in place to provide checks and balances, to provide oversight, to hold on jealously, as our Founders said, to the powers assigned to this body, we are doing nothing but surrendering.

And I am not going to surrender on this. I am not going to let this be normalized. This is wrong, what we are doing. This is wrong in every way you look at it. It is a folly. It is a disaster. It is a failure.

And all we need is the majority of this body to say enough, that we are going to hold hearings, that we are going to do investigations, that we are going to bring the leadership of the executive branch here to sit before the American public and explain these months—this 6 months of this war—what it has truly cost us, what we have lost, and how we are going to exit. It just makes sense, but I am seeing none of that.

I am going to yield the floor, but I am going to, again, ask this body to do its job, to create a democracy people can rely on, to end the suffering of the American people, to stop this heinous cost of a war with no strategy, no clear objectives, no reason, that is unconstitutional.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:34 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

GERARD KLOMP, OF UTAH, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE JAMES O'NEILL, RESIGNED.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

MARIA D'AVANZO, OF NEW YORK, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, VICE CAROL FORTINE OCHOA, RESIGNED.

EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

DAVID SLADE, OF FLORIDA, TO BE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2029, VICE JUDITH DELZOPPO PRYOR, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

TIMOTHY WESTLAKE, OF WISCONSIN, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE,

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, VICE MIRIAM E. DELPHIN-RITTMON, RESIGNED.

THE JUDICIARY

GREGORY CARL COOK, OF ALABAMA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA, VICE R. DAVID PROCTOR, RETIRED.

UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION

JOHN PETER CRONAN, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2029, VICE JOHN GLEESON, TERM EXPIRED.

THE JUDICIARY

ROBERT R. FLECK, OF PENNSYLVANIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE MARGARET BARTLEY, RETIRED.

DAVID M. JONES, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE A NEW POSITION CREATED BY PUBLIC LAW 118-196, APPROVED DECEMBER 23, 2024.

UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION

JASON MANION, OF OHIO, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENTENCING COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 31, 2029, VICE CLARIA HORN BOOM, TERM EXPIRED.

THE JUDICIARY

DANIEL F. RENDLEMAN, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS FOR THE TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS, VICE WILLIAM S. GREENBERG, DECEASED.

ANNA ST. JOHN, OF LOUISIANA, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT, VICE KURT D. ENGELHARDT, RETIRING.

FOREIGN SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING-NAMED CAREER MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO BE A FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER, A CONSULAR OFFICER, AND A SECRETARY IN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

AZIZ AHMED AHANG, OF VIRGINIA
STEPHEN R. ALLEN, OF MASSACHUSETTS
ELIZABETH LOUISE ALTMAYER, OF VIRGINIA
DIANA ALVARADO, OF FLORIDA
ROBERT ANTHONY ALVAREZ, OF CALIFORNIA
TODD PAUL ANDERSON, OF VIRGINIA
WILLIAM H. ANDREWS, OF VIRGINIA
NATASHA M. ANNIS, OF VIRGINIA
ALYSSA NICOLE BARCENAS, OF VIRGINIA
LAUREN ROCHELLE BARR, OF MARYLAND
ERIN KATHLEEN BARRETT, OF VIRGINIA
ZERLINA ELYSE BARTHOLOMEW, OF KENTUCKY
SAMANTHA JANE BATHIE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SUSAN L. BAUER, OF VIRGINIA
JEREMY ADAM BECK, OF OHIO
SARAH KAY BECKER, OF VIRGINIA
THEODORE ALBERT EDWARD BELL, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

CHRISTOPHER M. BERGERSON, OF FLORIDA
CHARLES P. BESNARD, OF MASSACHUSETTS
LINET BIDESSIAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
JESSICA L. BIGKNEFE, OF VIRGINIA
ERIC ANDERSON BISHOP, OF VIRGINIA
COREY DAMON BOUDREAU, OF VIRGINIA
DOUGLAS P. BOVE, OF FLORIDA
LAUREN ELIZABETH BRAUER, OF VIRGINIA
KATHERINE E. BURKE, OF VIRGINIA
DANIEL PAUL BUTTERFOSS, OF MINNESOTA
SEAN M. CALLAGHAN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PAULA ALEXIS CERDA, OF ARIZONA
JAD CHAMSEDDINE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
KAMESH V. CHIVUKULA, OF CONNECTICUT
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ROBERT C. COLEMAN, OF FLORIDA
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ADRIA H. COOPER, OF NEVADA
TIKKARA S. COOPER, OF ILLINOIS
GABRIEL CORTEZ, OF ARIZONA
KEVIN ROBERT JOSEPH GRISSON, OF SOUTH DAKOTA
ADRIENNE M. CROZAT, OF VIRGINIA
CANDAN U. CURTIS, OF VIRGINIA
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HANA E. DAMORIE, OF ARIZONA
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SEAN THOMAS DANIELS, OF SOUTH DAKOTA
MARGARET W. DAPICE, OF VIRGINIA
KALA K. DETERVILLE, OF NEW YORK
ADAM R. DEVAHUE, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
CASEY A. DRISCOLL, OF VIRGINIA
ADAM CRAIG DUNN, OF NEW YORK
JOHN C. DWYER, OF WASHINGTON
NICHOLAS CONRAD DWYER, OF WASHINGTON
NATHAN L. ECKSTEIN, OF ILLINOIS
NICOLE M. EDWARDS, OF INDIANA
EKOW N. EDZIE, OF CALIFORNIA
NICHOLAS BEECHY ENZ, OF MARYLAND
DANIEL ESTUARDO ENZQUEL, OF VIRGINIA
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ALEXANDER GARY FAY, OF VIRGINIA
MITCHELL SCOTT FENNELL, OF OREGON
MARCUS B. FERGUSON, OF VIRGINIA
PATRICK D. FIDUCIA, OF VIRGINIA
BARBARA TENDERENDA FILIP, OF VIRGINIA

GARRETT L. FLINT, OF UTAH
SUSAN STANCAMPANO FORTNAM, OF VIRGINIA
SHERMAUN CHRISTOPHER FOX, OF NORTH CAROLINA
LILY CATHERINE FRYER, OF CALIFORNIA
FAITH E. FUGAR, OF MARYLAND
ELIZABETH DIANE GALVAN, OF VIRGINIA
WILLIAM J. GEIS, OF VIRGINIA
MOJIB ZIARMAL GHAZNAWI, OF VIRGINIA
REBECCA SU-YING GOLDBERG, OF VIRGINIA
SOFIA NANCY GOMEZ, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
REBECCA MICHELLE GREEN, OF ARIZONA
SEAN PHILIP GRIFFIN, OF VIRGINIA
JESSICA LUZ GUMUCIO, OF NORTH CAROLINA
CINDY GUO, OF MARYLAND
PAUL J. HAAN, OF VIRGINIA
RICHARD HAEUSSLER, OF VIRGINIA
SARAH A. HALE, OF VIRGINIA
PETER M. HALIGAS, OF VIRGINIA
CHRISTIAN R. HARBOUR, OF VIRGINIA
DENISE R. HARE, OF FLORIDA
SAMUEL E. HARGADINE, OF WYOMING
JAMES C. HATCHER, OF VIRGINIA
TAYLOR CECILIA HENNELLY, OF VIRGINIA
JASON WILLIS HICKMAN, OF VIRGINIA
JUSTIN J. HOFFERT, OF VIRGINIA
RICHARD A. HOUSTON, OF VIRGINIA
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WILLIAM PARISH HUNTINGTON, OF VIRGINIA
JONATHAN MARTIN ISHEE, OF VIRGINIA
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JASMER N. JIAO, OF VIRGINIA
CECILIA M. JOHNSON, OF GEORGIA
KATHRYN LYNN JOHNSTON, OF VIRGINIA
JOSHUA S. JONES, OF NEVADA
PAULA ALLECIA MISHEL JONES, OF OKLAHOMA
MARGARET EICHLER KARRAS, OF VIRGINIA
JULIE MARIE KAUFFMAN, OF VIRGINIA
AMANDA E. KEPALAS, OF VIRGINIA
AARON E. KEYS, OF VIRGINIA
CHRISTOPHER KINNEY, OF VIRGINIA
CHRISTIN MICHELLE KIRSCHNER, OF VIRGINIA
SHAREEN J. C. KITTEBERMAN, OF VIRGINIA
STEVEN DAVID KLOOS, OF VIRGINIA
DANIEL ELMAR KOIK, OF VIRGINIA
TIMOTHY F. KUSTUSCH, OF ILLINOIS
KATARINA E. LAGE RAMOS, OF SOUTH DAKOTA
ASHLEY K. LANGFELDT, OF VIRGINIA
WILLIAM P. LANGLEY, OF VIRGINIA
JEFFREY S. LARUE, OF OKLAHOMA
SIN YAN LAU, OF IDAHO
TIFFANY N. LAW, OF UTAH
IAN SCOTT LEARMONTH, OF VIRGINIA
JENNIFER LYNN LEDBETTER, OF VIRGINIA
THOMAS M. LIMMER, OF MARYLAND
HANNAH GABRIELLE LITKOWSKI, OF FLORIDA
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MIRANDA GRACE LUPION, OF NEW YORK
WILLIAM WENDELL MACKEY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ERICA L. MAGNUSSON, OF VIRGINIA
ZOUHAI MAKHFI, OF VIRGINIA
JOHN HENRI MALONE, OF VIRGINIA
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JESSICA ELAINE LEE MARTIN, OF SOUTH DAKOTA
MAXWELL ALAN MARTIN, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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JENNIFER MCGEVNA MCGRADY, OF SOUTH CAROLINA
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SIVANI W. RASANAYAKAM, OF COLORADO
DANIEL K. RAYNES, OF VIRGINIA