classified briefing to the Senate on AI risks, including cyber threats and sending technology to China, we still haven't heard anything—crickets—on the most important issue of our day. Maybe Trump isn't worried because his family has hundreds of millions, if not billions, of dollars tied up in the AI economy. Trump doesn't care about protecting the American people, just his personal bottom line. We have all learned that through the years, and it disgusts most Americans. The President just refuses to get up off the bench, and that is unacceptable.

Will Republicans continue to sit with their President on the sidelines? This week, Democrats will continue to push Congress and the administration to act on AI. Republicans have to join us in reining in an unchecked AI before it is too late.

Please, please, Trump, wake up. The world is changing rapidly, and if we don't change and adapt to it and protect ourselves from the excesses of it, we are all going to be in big trouble.

CHINA

Mr. President, on the Xi Jinping visit, I urge Trump not to sell out America for a headline when he meets with Xi Jinping tomorrow. Trump keeps talking a big game about winning the AI race against China, but he is forfeiting our lead every day by refusing to block the sale of our most advanced chips and manufacturing equipment to China. Just today, Trump was bragging to the U.N. about how America's technology is the best in the world.

Well, then don't give that tech to the Chinese Communist Party. Prohibiting China from accessing these chips and equipment they desperately want is our best tool to keep China's AI ambitions at bay, and Trump wants to just hand it over to them. It doesn't make any sense.

Trump needs to make clear to Xi that our cutting-edge AI technology is not up for negotiation; it is off the table, period—no ands, no ifs, no buts. Trump can block these sales before Xi's plane even hits the tarmac tomorrow.

We have put forward bipartisan bills to ban the sale of these advanced chips to China, cut off access to chipmaking equipment, and prevent smuggling of this technology. Just get on board, Donald. Don't stand in the way.

Sadly, we all know what Trump's goal is with summits like this. He is chasing a headline, chasing a photo op, not a victory for the American people.

In almost every one of these summits when he chases a headline, Americans lose.

IRAN

Mr. President, on Iran and the war, only Trump could try to present himself as a peacemaker and then threaten to ''annihilate'' an entire country in the same breath, but that is just what he did at the U.N. this morning.

Trump said he had to make a ''big decision'' either to cut a deal with Iran or to ''drive them into hell with no chance of survival.'' What a sickening statement from a wannabe Nobel laureate for peace. He thinks he is being smart by threatening them. His threats over the last several months haven't worked.

Donald, nothing you have done has worked; end the damn war.

And hey, Donald, you made another big decision 7 months ago; you decided to take our country to war without a second thought. Trump had no idea what he was doing when he got our country into this mess. Seven months later, he has no clue how to get us out, even though everyone told him the first thing to do is block the Strait of Hormuz, secure the Strait of Hormuz.

He didn't do it. He doesn't listen. Whatever pops into his own head seems to be what America does, and it almost always works out very badly for America and the American people. Trump needs to reckon with the cost of his catastrophic blunder in Iran.

Over the weekend, we learned that the Pentagon has spent at least $45 billion on the war. Trump's war led diesel prices to hit another record high today at $6.52 a gallon. That means higher prices on everything that is transported by truck. Worst of all, Trump continues to try to cover up the human costs of this failed war.

Anonymous Pentagon officials just revealed that the Trump administration has refused to disclose the deaths of at least 4 servicemembers bringing the sad total up to 22 at least.

The administration's refusal to recognize these fallen servicemen ought to make everybody's skin crawl. I hope their families know how much we appreciate their loved ones' service and sacrifice. This week, Senate Democrats will force another vote on our War Powers Resolution to end this war and get our troops out of harm's way.

Trump, stop bragging about the fake number of wars you have supposedly ended and end the real one right in front of you. Every Republican who votes against ending the war this week is choosing to pander to the President instead of protecting our troops and our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, if a person walks the Halls of the U.S. Capitol, there is a pretty good chance you will bump into a reporter. They are seemingly around every corner with their phones out ready to ask your opinion on a recent statement or the news of the day.

Those of us who serve in this Chamber have become used to their presence, and their many, many questions. While we may bristle when they press us, we know that these journalists serve an indispensable purpose; they shine a light on the Senate, and they keep the American people informed about their government.

The work these reporters perform is a great service to our Nation, one that deserves our thanks. Yet, you won't hear that kind of gratitude coming out of the Trump White House.

Since President Trump returned to the Oval Office, he has done more to undermine, belittle, and attack the free press in America than any President in modern history.

Last year, after the Associated Press refused to use the President's invented name for the Gulf of Mexico, the President barred the organization from access to the Oval Office and to Air Force One.

At the same time, he launched an unprecedented number of baseless defamation lawsuits against respected news outlets for their factual reporting on his failed businesses, his relationship with Jeffrey Epstein, and his role in the January 6, 2021, insurrection right here in this Capitol.

On Friday, President Trump took his war against the press to new depths and banned CNN, MS NOW, and POLITICO reporters from the White House grounds because of his personal disagreements with their coverage.

No President in the history of the United States has ever stooped this low.

This Trump decision has no modern precedent. A credentialed media outlet has never been banned from the entirety of the White House. This ban is unconstitutional retaliation for actual reporting. It is something you would expect to read about in the communist Russia days with Pravda and Izvestia or perhaps in North Korea, but not in the United States.

This assault on the press is a dangerous effort by the President to distract American public opinion away from his failed agenda, his endless Iranian war, and his self-defeating tariffs.

Trump has broken countless promises made during his campaign for President. Chastising CNN won't lower the price of diesel fuel; punishing POLITICO won't end the Iranian war; and maligning MS NOW won't save the President's free-falling approval ratings.

Yet, the President seems determined to double down on his assault on the First Amendment. Yesterday, the White House announced the creation of Trump TV, a news channel designed to spread propaganda from the Trump White House.

I would have thought the creation of a state-run media platform to serve as the President's megaphone would have generated some sort of response, some sort of outcry from my Republican colleagues who condemn communism and authoritarianism, but they are afraid to say a word lest this press operation and President Trump turn on them.

I urge all my colleagues to speak out against this ban and the President's continued assault on the free press. The future of our democracy demands us standing up for the Constitution, even if the President won't.

CHINA

Mr. President, tomorrow Chinese President Xi Jinping will visit Washington and meet with President Trump. The meeting between the leaders of our two countries is important and timely. Both nations have a great deal to discuss, including in areas of shared concern and disagreement.

I met regularly with the Chinese Ambassador during my time in the Senate, and while we often—often—disagree, I welcome our continued engagements as constructive and helpful in avoiding conflict between the two great powers.

Certainly, our nations have many areas of shared concern, including the dangers of AI research, North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons, climate change and energy supplies, global economic stability, and reduced tensions in and around the South Pacific.

And we undoubtedly have points of continued disagreement on issues such as the future of Taiwan, Chinese harassment of allies, the war in Ukraine, economic espionage, and stemming fentanyl precursors from being exported by China, and of course, basic political freedoms and human rights.

Earlier this year, the Senate unanimously passed a resolution I led with Senator TED CRUZ, a Republican from Texas, calling for the release of several notable political prisoners being held in China.

Not long after, and with the assistance of President Trump, Pastor Ezra Jin was released after 266 days in a Chinese prison for the crime of operating a church.

I had the pleasure of hosting Pastor Jin and his daughter Grace, who was tireless in her effort to plead her father's case. She came to the Capitol after his release for a moving discussion and meeting. The pastor reminded us that at least eight of his congregants remain in prison.

I welcome President Xi's release of Pastor Jin and call on him to similarly release these remaining congregants, as well as the following mentioned in our Senate resolution. They are up here, four of them: Dr. Gulshan Abbas, Jimmy Lai, Gao Quanfu and his wife Pang Yu, and Ekpar Asat. They are all noted on this poster.

President Trump has a chance to secure the release of these detainees, who have already suffered so much, and I hope he will separately make the request to Xi during his visit. Such a move by Xi would be a most welcome gesture, particularly since there is no reason to fear these people. They have done nothing but exercise peaceful freedom of religion and expression.

And to those still detained and their heartbroken families, I want to remind them that they are not forgotten.

WEDDING OF DONALD TRUMP, JR.

Finally, today I received a letter from my colleague from Utah JOHN CURTIS, a Republican from Utah. He is from Provo. He is formerly the mayor. We have gone together on trips. Our families know one another, and I like JOHN. Our politics notwithstanding, there are many things we agree on. He sent a letter raising a question as to whether there has been a violation of ethical standards at the highest level of our government.

Now, JOHN showed real courage in doing this. As a Republican, to say anything critical of the Trump administration is a risk. But he has been a brave man, and he is a man of principle.

What he called on is for Chairman CHUCK GRASSLEY of Iowa and myself, as ranking Democratic member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, to have an investigation and a hearing of Donald Trump, Jr.'s recent wedding, where he received lavish gifts from a Russian oligarch close to Vladimir Putin. This sort of thing cannot be allowed to happen without some response from Congress, and Senator CURTIS is right: The Senate Judiciary Committee is the place to start.

I know some will argue that we only have a few months left in this year. But let me tell you something: We are not overworking ourselves during those few months. We have enough resources and staff and talent, on a bipartisan basis, to call Donald Trump, Jr., before the committee for a deposition to answer some basic questions about who paid for his wedding ceremony.

Now, in fairness, Senator CURTIS also asked the same of Hunter Biden. To be fair to Hunter Biden, who has already responded to say he is willing to appear wherever we wish, he has already been subject to a sworn deposition at length and has answered the questions that were propounded to him. But there has been no such effort made by the Trump family to explain the largess of gifts being given to members of his family, not to mention the $1.4 billion which he was given—the President was given—in income in his first year of the second term.

These are legitimate questions about corruption. There was a time when both parties would agree that it was unacceptable for this to happen, regardless of whether the origin was Democrat or Republican. That still applies.

Senator CURTIS is right. I stand by his request of the Senate Judiciary Committee to respond to this request for deposition and investigation.

We may not be able to finish it this year, but shame on us if we won't even consider the issue, as timely as it is.

It is important that this Senate function to uphold the ethical standards of our government, and this is a classic example at the highest levels of our government.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL ROBERT SUCHER

Mr. BUDD. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Col. Robert Sucher of the U.S. Marine Corps for his exemplary 30 years of faithful service to our Nation.

Many of my colleagues in the Chamber, including myself, have had the distinct privilege of working closely with Colonel Sucher over the past 2 years, during his tenure as the Director of the Marine Corps Senate Liaison Office.

I came to appreciate his steadfast leadership firsthand while he served as the commanding officer of Marine Barracks Washington, where I was deeply honored to be a guest of honor at one of their historic Tuesday sunset parades.

Throughout his time on Capitol Hill, Colonel Sucher and his dedicated team have consistently prioritized the relationship between the Marine Corps and the U.S. Senate. In this liaison role, Colonel Sucher enabled the successful execution of more than 50 international congressional delegations.

My team and I have had the privilege of traveling with him on several of these official trips, including most recently to Central and Eastern Europe. On these demanding missions, his foresight and leadership were constantly on display.

In addition to leading congressional delegations, Colonel Sucher distinguished himself through exceptional support to every Member of this body. He expertly managed inquiries and requests for information from nearly all 100 Senate offices, always providing timely and precise answers grounded in truth.

He has proven an indispensable asset to this body, consistently demonstrating exceptional problem-solving under pressure, outstanding communication skills, and a wealth of operational knowledge, representing both the Marine Corps and the Department of War.

He exemplifies the absolute professionalism we have come to expect from the U.S. Marines. Through his three decades of service, Colonel Sucher has proven to be an officer of the absolute highest caliber, and he is leaving the Marine Corps well positioned to continue its vital contributions to our national security.

My colleagues and I bid a fond farewell to Colonel Sucher. We extend our deepest gratitude to his wife Caroline and their sons Will—who, by the way, is a proud North Carolinian—and Drew for the immense sacrifices they have made in supporting their husband and father as he guarded our freedom.

To my friend Robb, we wish you fair winds and following seas in all of your future endeavors.

CHINA

Mr. President, this week, President Xi Jinping will visit the United States for bilateral meetings at a pivotal moment for United States-China relations. During his two terms in office, President Trump has been clear that under his leadership, the United States must engage with China given the reality of our economic relationship, but we can't forget that China is also a competitor and an adversary.

The Chinese Communist Party's malign influence on the world stage is