

I think this citizen of the United States, this Senator, ought to consider that sometimes we get driven by ideological waves in that we tend to think we have got all the answers. We can remember that there were a lot of conservative Republicans during the 1930s who thought Hitler was on the right track to bring peace to the world. Then we had a lot of liberals at that time, even through World War II, who thought that Joseph Stalin's murderous regime was the answer to all of our questions and all of the problems that this world had.

Now we have people who think Russia is somehow a good nation. They have institutionalized corruption in that country. They have murdered their political opponents. They imprison citizens for giving mild criticism to the country. They hold American citizens hostage—and hundreds of thousands of their people have been killed in this useless war.

Conservatives imagine that Russia doesn't exist today as I just described, so they are willing to sit down with people who have no political liberties, no political opposition. And it seems to me this is something that this Senator would not do.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, early Friday morning, the Senate passed a budget resolution to lay the groundwork for border, energy, and national security legislation. We considered a lot of amendments from my Democratic colleagues, not one of which, interestingly enough, was centered on border security and very few of which addressed either national security or energy security. But that was, I have to say, not terribly surprising. After all, the Democratic leader seemed to think, to the very end, that this budget resolution had something to do with tax cuts for billionaires, even though it has absolutely and exactly nothing to do with tax cuts of any kind. I am not sure if he was honestly confused or merely felt that he could achieve something messaging-wise by pretending this bill had something to do with billionaires.

But for the record, let me review what this bill was about. As everyone here knows, whether they want to acknowledge it or not, the chaos that President Biden allowed to rage at our southern border left a gaping hole in our national security. That is a hole that President Trump and Republicans are determined to close. And since day one of his administration, President

Trump has been fulfilling his campaign promise to crack down on illegal immigration and secure our border.

In addition to surging support to the southern border, his administration has been focused on arresting and deporting criminal aliens—from rapists and murderers to child sex predators and dangerous gang members—and they have made a lot of progress already.

But as the President's border czar made clear to Republican Senators 2 weeks ago, these efforts cannot continue without additional funding from Congress. So Republicans are moving forward on legislation to fund continued efforts to deport criminal aliens as well as provide other necessary resources to secure our border, discourage illegal immigration, and restore respect for the rule of law. That was what Friday's budget resolution was about.

And it is too bad that my Democratic colleagues aren't interested in joining us on border security legislation, but I will tell you, with or without Democrats, Republicans are moving full speed ahead. We owe the American people a secure border, and we intend to give it to them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant 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. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

VLADIMIR PUTIN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 3 years ago, Vladimir Putin brought war and destruction to the free people of Ukraine. Three years ago, a powerful, hungry autocrat broke the peace in Europe, violated the sovereignty of an independent democracy, and rolled tanks and weapons and troops across the Ukrainian borders without provocation or justification.

Vladimir Putin has sealed his place in history as an enemy to democracy, to freedom, and to peace. He has killed tens of thousands of innocent civilians. His rockets have destroyed homes and churches and schools and hospitals—deliberately, in many cases.

A year ago, I was there. I saw the destruction. I saw parking lots being turned into mass graves. I spoke with soldiers near the border trying to defend their homes. And I felt the deep resolve of the Ukrainian people. I felt the value of America's leadership and the international struggle to push back against Putin's evil aggression.

Today, we remember Bucha, we remember the atrocities in Mariupol, and we remember everywhere where Putin's horrors have touched. We honor the lives lost at the hands of Russia's war of aggression, and we will

not let Vladimir Putin and his thugs off the hook.

For 3 years, the United States has been clear on where we stand. We have stood on the side of democracy, the inviolability of borders, and the freedom of nations—and against Vladimir Putin.

We passed in this Chamber robust, bipartisan security assistance. The United States united the leaders of the West, and for years we succeeded in turning Putin into a pariah.

But today, on this third anniversary of Putin's war, Donald Trump is turning his back on the values that America stands for of democracy, of security, and of liberty. Instead of standing up to Putin, Donald Trump is siding with him and against our own allies. Instead of condemning Putin's lies, Donald Trump is parroting Russian misinformation and propaganda, in defiance of all evidence, without regard to any facts, and with utter contempt for the truth.

Today, President Trump met with President Macron. President Macron is advising Donald Trump not to show weakness—not to show weakness—to Putin at this pivotal moment. Donald Trump should heed President Macron's warning, or else Putin is going to eat his lunch, and America is going to suffer in the long term.

American support of a pro-Western democracy under attack is not charity. It is about our own long-term security. For Donald Trump to show weakness to Putin is to endanger America's security tomorrow.

If history tells us one thing about autocrats, it is that their hunger is never satiated. It is never enough. They will keep going one way or another until they are halted.

What are Poland and Latvia and Lithuania and Estonia supposed to think about Putin's belligerence next door to them? What is NATO supposed to make of Donald Trump's eagerness to deal with autocrats instead of our own allies?

If Donald Trump sells out democracy in Europe today, what will Donald Trump sell out tomorrow? Democracy in America? Our national security, which he is already starting to do?

The way Donald Trump is engaging with Vladimir Putin right now is not going to make America any safer in the long run. This all goes back to a pattern we have seen from Donald Trump from the very beginning. He has always admired autocrats, strongmen, and bullies; always shown contempt for the rule of law, for truth, for accountability, for facts—because his ultimate goal is to skew things in favor of the wealthy and corrupt few at the expense of everybody else.

Just like his push for taxes, just like his empowering DOGE, Donald Trump's modus operandi is to trample on safeguards and basic accountability—values central to any free democracy—in order to allow corrupt billionaires, the wealthy few, and cronies to fill in the void.

This is exactly the world Vladimir Putin wants, and little by little, Donald Trump is helping him make it happen.

BUDGET

Mr. President, on the Republican budget, last week, Senate Republicans passed their budget resolution, clearing the way to massive tax giveaways for Donald Trump's billionaire buddies. From the moment Donald Trump was sworn in, everything Republicans have done can be boiled down to this: Billionaires win; American families lose. That is the Republican agenda in a nutshell.

This week, it is House Republican's turn. Today, I want to say this about the Republican plan in the House: It doesn't matter which path Republicans ultimately go with—one bill, two bills, 50 bills. At the end of the day, Republicans are very clear: They want to cut taxes for billionaires and have the American people pay the cost.

Republicans want to perhaps push the biggest cuts to Medicaid ever so billionaires can have another tax break. That is morally corrupt and politically bankrupt.

With a government shutdown just a few weeks away, what are Republicans doing? They are spending precious time trying to cater to the wishes of the absolutely richest people in America, instead of working to avoid a disastrous halt of services that help tens of millions of middle-class American families. Their priorities are utterly skewed and upside down.

If House Republicans proceed this week, the backlash, "upsetness," and anger House Republicans saw in their townhalls last week is only going to get far more thunderous.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

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

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

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT COLONEL HARRY STEWART, JR.

Mrs. BRITT. Mr. President, earlier this month, the United States of America lost a legend: Harry Stewart, Jr., one of the last surviving Tuskegee Airmen, died at the age of 100.

Lieutenant Colonel Stewart's legacy is one of excellence. He grew up watching planes come in and out of LaGuardia Airport, dreaming of one day flying himself.

At just 18 years old, Lieutenant Colonel Stewart joined a new initiative launched in Alabama; a first of its kind training program for Black pilots established after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

He flew 43 missions from late 1944 to the spring of 1945 with the 332nd Fighter Group; earning the Distinguished

Flying Cross after downing three German planes in a dogfight just before the Allied victory in Europe.

Lieutenant Colonel Stewart didn't recognize the gravity of what he was doing at the time, he said in an interview just last year. He just wanted to serve his country, and serve his country he did.

But let's stop for a moment and think about what that means. Lieutenant Colonel Stewart and the rest of the Tuskegee Airmen signed up to fight for a country that did not allow them the same rights as White citizens. They put their lives on the line to fight for a country that treated them as second class.

They could not live, work, eat, or drink alongside White countrymen or women. It was a world where people who looked like them could be met with violent attacks just because of the color of their skin. Consider what that means—that Lieutenant Colonel Stewart and the Tuskegee Airmen dealt with all kinds of discrimination, and yet still decided to risk everything to serve this Nation.

They faced almost inconceivable injustices, but they also believed in the promise of America, even though that promise wasn't being met. They fought for that promise against the Nazis in Europe and in doing so, blazed a trail for countless others to follow.

After the war, Lieutenant Colonel Stewart and three of his fellow Tuskegee Airmen won the U.S. Air Force's inaugural TOPGUN competition, an accomplishment that wasn't acknowledged, though, until decades later.

Unfortunately, that was a common theme for Lieutenant Colonel Stewart after the war. After aspiring to become an airline pilot his whole life and even after serving heroically and earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, he was prevented from flying commercial jets because of his race.

Instead, he earned a mechanical engineering degree from New York University and remained in the Air Force Reserve. He taught the next generations of pilots until being recalled for duty during the Korean war. It wasn't until 2007 that the Tuskegee Airmen received the Congressional Gold Medal for their valor.

The legacies of Harry Stewart, Jr., and the rest of the pilots who made history, should be recognized as central to America's story.

In his first term, President Trump promoted Airman Charles McGee to brigadier general and pinned his stars in the Oval Office.

In his second term, Secretary Hegseth has reaffirmed that the Trump administration will continue to honor these heroes, and the Tuskegee Airmen will remain role models not only for the next generation of American servicemembers but for all Americans.

Lt. Col. Harry Stewart, Jr., and the pilots he flew with represent the best of America. Their courage and selfless-

ness in the face of adversity both at home and at war are inspirational.

And their legacies—those of greatness and unquestionable merit—deserve to be celebrated amongst the rest of our country's heroes, not just during Black History Month but all throughout the year.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BRITT). The Democratic whip.

(The remarks of Mr. DURBIN pertaining to the submission of S. Res. 91 are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, if cloture is invoked on the Driscoll nomination, the Senate vote immediately on the motion to invoke cloture on the Greer nomination; further, if cloture is invoked on the Greer nomination, all time be expired on the Driscoll and Greer nominations and the Senate vote on confirmation of the nominations at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, no earlier than Tuesday, February 25, with respect to the Driscoll nomination and Wednesday, February 26, with respect to the Greer nomination; finally, if the nominations are confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

WAIVING OF QUORUM CALLS

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to waive the mandatory quorum calls with respect to the Driscoll and Greer nominations.

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

The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the rollcall vote commence at this time.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 21, Daniel Driscoll, of North Carolina, to be Secretary of the Army.

John Thune, John R. Curtis, Steve Daines, Tim Sheehy, Marsha Blackburn, Eric Schmitt, John Boozman, Mike Crapo, Mike Rounds, Tommy