

strong record of enforcing environmental statutes in a balanced way and ensuring clean air and clean water without unnecessarily sacrificing jobs or economic growth.

Attorney General Pruitt has been clear that he will work with State regulators and listen to the views of individuals who will be most heavily impacted by EPA's regulatory decisions.

I believe Attorney General Pruitt will keep his word and provide a refreshing change and direction for West Virginia coal miners, natural gas workers, manufacturers, farmers, and, indeed, for all of our communities struggling from the effects of overregulation.

I look forward to supporting Attorney General Pruitt's nomination in the EPW Committee, which will come before the committee on Wednesday morning, and I look forward to seeing him confirmed on the Senate floor soon.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. GRASSLEY pertaining to the introduction of S.J. Res. 14 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. GRASSLEY. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NOMINATION OF REX TILLERSON

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, shortly we are going to be taking up the cloture motion in regard to the confirmation process of Mr. Tillerson to be the Secretary of State for our country. I had the opportunity, as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to meet with Mr. Tillerson. I had a chance to talk with him concerning his vision for America. I participated in a lengthy committee hearing, where not only I had a chance to ask him questions but every member of the committee had a chance to ask questions and then had the opportunity to present questions for the RECORD and look at his responses to questions for the RECORD.

I wish to say, at the outset of this debate before the U.S. Senate, Mr. Tillerson is a successful businessman. I am certain he has great negotiating skills, as he has shown as the CEO of ExxonMobil, and I think that is an important ability to have if he were confirmed as Secretary of State.

I do think he wants to serve our Nation, and he has put forward his ability to serve as Secretary of State for the right reasons. However, I have serious reservations, as a result of this process, this confirmation process, that leads me to the conclusion that I cannot support his nomination, and I will be voting against his nomination. I wanted to at least start this debate by giving some of the reasons I will not be supporting Mr. Tillerson to be the Secretary of State.

Mr. Tillerson's business orientation and his lack of moral clarity to questions that were asked during the confirmation hearing, to me, compromises his ability to forcefully promote the values and ideals that defined America's leading role in the world for more than 200 years. When I am referring to the values, they are the values of good governance, the values of standing up for human rights, the values of speaking up for a free press, the values of recognizing the importance of civil societies, which is lacking in so many places around the world.

When Mr. Tillerson was asked the question as to how he would characterize what Russia is doing in Syria in supporting a regime that has attacked humanitarian convoys, whether that should be considered as war crimes, Mr. Tillerson was less than clear as to how he would characterize Russia's conduct in Syria.

When I asked Mr. Tillerson how he would characterize Philippine President Duterte's extrajudicial killings—this is a President who has authorized individuals to be killed on site without judicial process, which has been well-documented—whether that was a gross violation of human rights, Mr. Tillerson was less than clear as to whether that in fact would elevate to a serious human rights violation.

When I asked the question, whether under any circumstances we could have a national registry for any group of religious or ethnic minorities in America, his answer was not as clear as I would have hoped it to be. The answer should have been a simple "no," but he did not give that answer in that moral clarity.

For all those reasons, I have serious concern as to whether he will speak with a strong voice on American values or whether that will be compromised for narrow business interests or for other considerations that should not take priority to the values that have made America the great Nation it is.

I was concerned about this before what has happened in recent days, but when I take a look at President Trump's first 10 days in office and I look at the Executive orders he has

issued as President of the United States, it is even more critical that the next Secretary of State speak with moral clarity as to the values of America.

The gag order that was reimposed by President Trump wasn't the same gag order that other administrations have imposed. It is far broader and could prevent U.S. participation with health workers around the world to stop the spread of HIV-AIDS or to deal with the Zika virus or to deal with issues concerning global health issues, maternal health. I want someone, as Secretary of State, to say that America stands for providing the leadership we need on global health issues.

More recently, when President Trump announced his Mexican policy; that it would build a wall, he not only asked the taxpayers to pay for it once but to pay for it twice, to build the wall, which almost anyone will tell you will not work. We do have tunnels that we already know could go under walls. It will be expensive, but he is also asking Americans to pay for it twice because he is going to impose a tariff, at least that is under consideration, that middle-income families will end up paying—starting a trade war with Mexico. And why? Why would you start this? Mexico is working with us to stop illegal immigration. They are working with us to stop the illegal trafficking of drugs. They are working with us to build a regional, natural economy that benefits both countries. Why would we pick a fight with our neighbor? It makes no sense whatsoever.

The last thing that was done over this weekend points out even more clearly why we need a Secretary of State who will speak with moral clarity, and that was this outrageous, reckless, and dangerous Executive order that would ban certain individuals from coming to America. It would put a hold on our refugee program and would establish a religious test for people coming to America—a Muslim ban. That is not what America stands for.

I believe that Executive order is illegal. I know that Executive order will put Americans at risk. I would like to know from our Secretary of State how he, if he is confirmed, would respond when other countries ask: Why should we help you when you will not allow people from Muslim countries the right to visit your country? Why should we give you that information? How will Americans, who are traveling abroad, be treated? It puts all at risk. Our next Secretary of State has to have that credibility to deal with other countries with moral clarity. Time and time again, when confronted with questions, Mr. Tillerson was not clear.

Let me give you one example that may sum up my concern on his moral clarity issues, and that is with Russia. We had asked several times whether he would support the existing sanctions, would he support stronger sanctions. After all, the sanctions were put on because Russia invaded Ukraine. They

are still there. They are still in Crimea. They are still interfering with eastern Ukraine. Unless they comply with the Minsk agreement, our European allies are looking for America to say no way would we ever weaken our sanctions as long as Russia is violating its commitment in Ukraine.

Since that, they have been doing other things. I already mentioned the war crimes they are committing in Syria, but they also attacked America. They attacked us through cyber, trying to bring down our democratic system of government, free elections. I would certainly have hoped Mr. Tillerson would have shown some compassion for increasing sanctions against Russia. Instead, we asked him a question about Cuba, and Mr. Tillerson was very clear when he talked about Cuba. He said: Look, if we do business with Cuba, we are allowing a repressive regime to have greater resources. Why would we want to support a repressive regime?

Mr. Tillerson didn't show the same concern about Russia. He has no compulsion at all about doing business with Russia, even though that business is allowing the Putin repressive regime to carry out their activities of attacks against our allies, attacks against us, interfere with what is going on in Syria, and to do all the activities they are doing. I would have hoped that we were seeing a greater sense of moral clarity from our Secretary of State nominee.

There are other issues I am concerned about. I know we will have a chance to talk about it if this issue is still on the floor tomorrow, as I expect it will be. We will have a chance to talk about issues regarding his quick use of military power versus diplomacy. We asked him several times about external events and how he will respond to them. His answer was too quick about using our military and not quick enough about using our diplomacy. The use of military must be a matter of last resort. I want to make sure our next Secretary of State is very sensitive to that particular issue.

Then we get to the concern about the ethical issues. I need to mention this because when we asked him questions about his knowledge of ExxonMobil, he was less than forthcoming to the committee, not aware of ExxonMobil's lobbying on certain issues, and very unclear about how its activities were in Sudan, Syria, Iran, and other countries that have horrible human rights records. And his willingness to recuse himself from anything affecting Exxon for 1 year, not for the entire length of term that he would be Secretary of State if confirmed by the Senate—he should not deal with ExxonMobil for the entire length of his time as Secretary of State. He is a person who has substantial wealth as a result of his working at ExxonMobil. None of us criticize him for that, but it disqualifies him from dealing with ExxonMobil.

We are going to be involved in a lengthy debate on the next Secretary of State, as we should, but I just wanted to share with my colleagues my concern about Mr. Tillerson and why I am opposing his nomination. And I would just indicate that I think the events particularly over the weekend with this immigration policy really point out the need for the next Secretary of State to be willing to stand strong for American values, and I have serious questions in that regard on Mr. Tillerson.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Madam President, I am pleased to rise in support of the nomination of Rex Tillerson to serve as our next Secretary of State. The proceedings in the Foreign Relations Committee for his nomination were fair, exhaustive, and in the best traditions of our committee and the Senate. Mr. Tillerson completed all of his required paperwork expeditiously, having met or exceeded the pace set by former Secretary Hillary Clinton after she was nominated in 2008. He testified in a public hearing for more than 8 hours and afterward responded to over 1,000 additional questions for the record from committee members.

Opinions and votes today on Mr. Tillerson may differ, but there is no question that the committee and the Senate have fulfilled their constitutional responsibility in carefully reviewing his nomination.

As we proceed in ensuring that the new administration has the leaders it needs to implement our Nation's foreign policy going forward, I have great confidence that Rex Tillerson will serve the United States well.

In both my private meetings with him and in the hours of public testimony he offered before the Foreign Relations Committee, it has become clear that he will be an effective leader at the State Department. Mr. Tillerson has led an exemplary and honorable life. He has been at the same company for over 40 years. As an Eagle Scout, he served as the national president of the Boy Scouts of America.

Furthermore, the nonpartisan Director of the Office of Government Ethics recently stated that Mr. Tillerson is making a clean break from Exxon and has even gone so far as to say that Tillerson's ethics agreement serves as a sterling model for what we would like to see with other nominees.

Having managed one of the world's largest companies by revenue, with over 75,000 employees, there is no doubt in my mind that Rex Tillerson is well qualified to lead the State Department. I encourage all of my colleagues to support his confirmation and look forward to his service as our next Secretary of State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION, THE PRESS, AND RUSSIA

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, Trump's Executive order banning Muslims from seven countries, none of which was a source of terrorists who have carried out attacks in this country, was un-American, arbitrary, inhumane, and it will likely spur an increase in violence targeting Americans. I will have plenty more to say about it and other reckless actions by this White House in the days and weeks ahead.

In the meantime, I want to say a few words about the bizarre back and forth between the Trump administration and the news media regarding attendance at the inauguration and who is telling the truth and who is not.

One might think that with all that is happening in the country and the world and the rush by the President to sign Executive orders that would dramatically affect the rights, and the priorities, of millions of Americans, the question of how many people were at the inauguration would not generate such controversy. But it turns out that this is about much more than that, as it goes to the heart of the role of a free press in this country and whether the American people can have confidence that the President is telling the truth.

We already knew that candidate and now President Trump is prone to bragging and making wildly unrealistic promises and inaccurate claims, many of which he later disavows. He frequently ignores or misstates basic facts and refuses to correct those falsehoods. So it was no surprise when he predicted that the crowd at his inauguration would be "an unbelievable, perhaps record-setting turnout."

It was also no surprise, as usually happens at inaugurations and large public demonstrations, that high-elevation photographs were used to estimate the number of participants. To anyone who attended both the Obama and Trump inaugurations, it was obvious that the number of people at President Obama's inauguration was far larger than at President Trump's inauguration, as photographs clearly showed.

President Trump, however, insisted the photographs were fabricated. The morning after the inauguration, he said he could see from the stage on the West Front of the Capitol that there were "a million" or "a million and a half" people on the Mall.

When reports clearly showed only a fraction of that, he accused news organizations of lying, calling them "among the most dishonest human beings on Earth," and warned that they would regret it.

Later that day, the President's spokesman, Sean Spicer, also accused the press of lying. He said the photographs were deceptive, and he insisted that President Trump's inauguration was "the most watched ever." That, of course, was a clever distortion of what the President actually said.