

Kelly Slaughter, of Maryland, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of seven years from September 26, 2015 en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 757.

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

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Andrea L. Thompson, of South Dakota, to be Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Thompson nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, many of us were shocked when the President tweeted that he was deploying the National Guard to the border.

The President's claim that we face a crisis at our Southwest border is simply false, and it is particularly ironic when the President himself has repeatedly bragged—again, falsely—that illegal border crossings are at an alltime low.

I remain concerned that the Trump administration is diverting Defense Department resources to the border to help carry out its deportation agenda. The Department is unable to tell Congress how much these deployments may cost our Nation—paid for with money diverted from other, critical de-

fense programs. So far, the Department of Defense has provided a preliminary estimate that these deployments will cost \$182 million in fiscal year 2018, but there is no end in sight.

I am also concerned that these deployments may harm the readiness of our National Guard by disrupting training for core missions. As one local elected official in New Mexico noted in the Albuquerque Journal, "We're going into forest fire season. A big percentage of the state is in drought right now, and if National Guard folks are continuously rotated down to the border for a problem that doesn't exist, are they going to be available for a real problem when it happens?"

Well, yesterday, Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson issued a surprising report, which inadvertently agreed with these concerns.

Last year, Congress required the Department of Defense to examine past deployments of National Guard troops to the border and to analyze those experiences for whether they had been beneficial for those Guard members. As Vice Chair of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, I received the Department's report yesterday.

It is fair to say that its conclusions are probably not what the President wanted to hear from his own political appointees.

The report notes that several States have conducted training and operations along the Southwest border. It concludes that training and operations by California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas Guard units "does not directly contribute to collective core Mission Essential Task readiness" of those units. In other words, we are diverting them from their most important missions.

It was even harsher in its conclusions for National Guard units from other States traveling to the border for similar training. It describes a pilot program to send 250 National Guard personnel to the border. Not only did the pilot program cost a half a million more than that unit's regular, scheduled training, but it also resulted in only 22 more apprehensions than normal, while contributing almost nothing to the unit's training.

The report also notes that these kinds of deployments "comes at a cost to the individual soldier, his/her family, and her/his employer, as well as to overall united readiness."

Is that what we want? To impose costs on our volunteer Guard personnel, their families, their employers supporting their service?

The report goes on to say, "Such tasking could also potentially impact support to validated Global Force Management Allocation Plan requirements." That is a mouthful, but it means that these deployments could make our National Guard less prepared to respond to a natural disaster back home or, God forbid, a war.

Is that what we want? No. There's an old adage that goes, when you find

yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is to stop digging.

We all know that the President wants to build a wall on the border, but he has failed to convince Congress that spending \$25 billion on a campaign promise is the right thing to do. Instead, he is sending the outstanding women and men of the National Guard to the border, as if to compensate for his inability to work with Congress.

I have met a great number of members of the National Guard, and I know they will carry out their assigned duties as well as they can. Many will view their deployments as a chance to serve the country they love, but we owe it to them to send them on a mission that is worth it, and the Pentagon's own study raises serious questions about that.

I hope that we end National Guard deployments to staff the crisis that the President invented and get them back to their core job: protecting their States and protecting this country.

FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABDUCTION OF THE CHIBOK GIRLS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I would like to recognize a tragic anniversary upon us this month. Four years ago this month, the terrorist group Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls in the dead of the night from a school in Chibok, Nigeria, where they were taking final exams.

Some of the girls managed to run away, but Boko Haram abducted 219 girls.

These hundreds of young girls were held captive, abused, made to be slaves, forced into marriage with their abductors, raped, starved, and, in some cases, forcibly converted to Islam.

Some have tragically died while trying to flee or even during childbirth.

You might recall the global campaign on Twitter, #BringBackOurGirls, to urge the rescue of the girls.

Former First Lady Michelle Obama was moved to join the campaign for the release of the girls, as were over 3 million people around the world.

I, myself, was mortified to learn that, for the mere act of seeking an education, the girls were abducted and forced into child marriage or slavery. That is why, back then in 2014, I introduced a resolution condemning the Chibok abduction and calling for the immediate, safe return of the girls.

Since the kidnapping, just over 100 girls have been released, leaving over 100 girls still missing. I fear some may have already perished.

Parents marked the fourth anniversary on Saturday by marching with thousands of others to the school in Chibok where the girls were abducted in 2014.

I think we should join them here in the Senate in remembering this tragic anniversary.

That is why I have introduced, with some of my female colleagues, a resolution calling for the immediate release of all Boko Haram captives, especially the remaining Chibok girls.