(1) A detailed biographical resume which contains information relating to education, employment, and achievements;

(2) Financial information, in such specificity as the Committee deems necessary, including a list of assets and liabilities of the nominee and tax returns for the 3 years preceding the time of his or her nomination, and copies of other relevant documents requested by the Committee, such as a proposed blind trust agreement, necessary for the Committee's consideration; and,

(3) Copies of other relevant documents the Committee may request, such as responses to questions concerning the policies and programs the nominee intends to pursue upon taking office. At the request of the Chairman or the Ranking Minority Member, a nominee shall be required to submit a certified financial statement compiled by an independent auditor. Information received pursuant to this subsection shall be made available for public inspection; provided, however, that tax returns shall, after review by persons designated in subsection (C) of this rule, be placed under seal to ensure confidentiality.

C. Procedures for Committee inquiry. The Committee shall conduct an inquiry into the experience, qualifications, suitability, and integrity of nominees, and shall give particular attention to the following matters:

(1) A review of the biographical information provided by the nominee, including, but not limited to, any professional activities related to the duties of the office to which he or she is nominated;

(2) A review of the financial information provided by the nominee, including tax returns for the 3 years preceding the time of his or her nomination;

(3) A review of any actions, taken or proposed by the nominee, to remedy conflicts of interest; and

(4) A review of any personal or legal matter which may bear upon the nominee's qualifications for the office to which he or she is nominated. For the purpose of assisting the Committee in the conduct of this inquiry, a Majority investigator or investigators shall be designated by the Chairman and a Minority investigator or investigators shall be designated by the Ranking Minority Member. The Chairman, Ranking Minority Member, other Members of the Committee, and designated investigators shall have access to all investigative reports on nominees prepared by any Federal agency, except that only the Chairman, the Ranking Minority Member, or other Members of the Committee, upon request, shall have access to the report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Committee may request the assistance of the U.S. Government Accountability Office and any other such expert opinion as may be necessary in conducting its review of information provided by nominees.

D. Report on the Nominee. After a review of all information pertinent to the nomination, a confidential report on the nominee shall be made in the case of judicial nominees and may be made in the case of non-judicial nominees by the designated investigators to the Chairman and the Ranking Minority Member and, upon request, to any other Member of the Committee. The report shall summarize the steps taken by the Committee during its investigation of the nominee and the results of the Committee inquiry, including any unresolved matters that have been raised during the course of the inquiry.

E. Hearings. The Committee shall conduct a public hearing during which the nominee shall be called to testify under oath on all matters relating to his or her suitability for office, including the policies and programs which he or she will pursue while in that position. No hearing shall be held until at least 72 hours after the following events have occurred: The nominee has responded to prehearing questions submitted by the Committee; and, if applicable, the report described in subsection (D) has been made to the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, and is available to other Members of the Committee, upon request.

F. Action on confirmation. A mark-up on a nomination shall not occur on the same day that the hearing on the nominee is held. In order to assist the Committee in reaching a recommendation on confirmation, the staff may make an oral presentation to the Committee at the mark-up, factually summarizing the nominee's background and the steps taken during the pre-hearing inquiry.

G. Application. The procedures contained in subsections (C), (D), (E), and (F) of this rule shall apply to persons nominated by the President to positions requiring their full-time service. At the discretion of the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, those procedures may apply to persons nominated by the President to serve on a part-time basis.

RULE 9. PERSONNEL ACTIONS AFFECTING COMMITTEE STAFF

In accordance with Rule XLII of the Standing Rules of the Senate and the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (P.L. 104–1), all personnel actions affecting the staff of the Committee shall be made free from any discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, state of physical handicap, or disability.

RULE 10. APPRISAL OF COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Chairman and Ranking Minority Member shall keep each other apprised of hearings, investigations, and other Committee business.

RULE 11. PER DIEM FOR FOREIGN TRAVEL

A per diem allowance provided a Member of the Committee or staff of the Committee in connection with foreign travel shall be used solely for lodging, food, and related expenses and it is the responsibility of the Member of the Committee or staff of the Committee receiving such an allowance to return to the United States Government that portion of the allowance received which is not actually used for necessary lodging, food, and related expenses. (Rule XXXIX, Paragraph 3, Standing Rules of the Senate.)

INF TREATY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, today I wish to express my deep concerns regarding President Trump's suspension of U.S. participation in the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces—INF—Treaty and decision to withdraw from the treaty in 6 months.

Before diving into the substance of this misguided decision, I am compelled, as the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to object to the process.

The President is pulling out of this treaty, a treaty that was approved by the U.S. Senate by a vote of 93–5 and that has been in force for three decades, without official notice or any meaningful consultation with the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the congressional committee charged with responsibility and jurisdiction over treaties and without the approval of the Senate.

This was despite multiple opportunities to explain the rationale for this decision, including a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on arms control and Russia. In that hearing, senior officials from the Department of State and the Department of Defense provided no indication that a decision to withdraw was even imminent, nor that U.S. forces envisioned any military operational benefit from near-term withdrawal.

Article 2 of the Constitution endows the President and the Senate with shared power over treaties, including an exceptionally high bar for advice and consent. This President's unilateral decision to withdraw from the INF, without any meaningful engagement with the Senate, much less the approval of this body, is impossible to square with this shared constitutional power.

In that vein, I urge all of my colleagues to focus not just on the substance of the President's decision but also on the process. INF is not alone; it is one of several treaties that the President has jettisoned without any input from the Senate. He is eroding the constitutional powers and institutional prerogatives of this body, and we cannot be silent.

Even if the President had followed a sound process, this decision is misguided on substance. It is another example of the President and his team's apparent belief that destroying international agreements, with little or no thought given to how to address the underlying problem, is the solution to a complex security issues.

In this case, there is no doubt, what the problem is and where it comes from.

Russia, and Russia alone, bears the responsibility for the degradation of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty. It has brazenly violated the treaty and has been unwilling to take the steps necessary to come back into compliance.

Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats has succinctly laid out Russia's efforts to undermine the INF treaty. He stated ''the Intelligence Community assesses Russia has flight-tested, produced, and deployed cruise missiles with a range capability prohibited by the Treaty.''

Why is Russia doing this? Again, according to Director Coats: Russia is developing missiles to ''target critical European military and economic infrastructure'' with both conventional and nuclear capabilities. Russia is seeking the means to coerce our European and Asian allies by ''posing a direct conventional and nuclear threat'' to them.

Russia's violation of its INF treaty obligations and its nuclear threats against Europe are not particularly surprising. It fits within a pattern of malign behavior that seeks to undermine the security framework that contributed to the peaceful end to the Cold War. Russia has suspended its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and of course

violated the core principles of the Helsinki accord by annexing Crimea and invading Ukraine.

The question has never been whether Russia is violating the INF treaty. It is and has been in violation. The question is how the United States should respond.

Throughout the process of trying to bring Russia back into compliance, I have raised serious concerns about the Trump administration's approach. As is the case with most major foreign policy challenges facing the United States, the Trump administration lacks a coherent strategy. In this case, they do not appear to have any realistic plan to address the threat that new Russian missile capabilities pose to the interests of the United States and those of our allies.

By withdrawing from INF at this time, the United States is providing Russia with a pass on its obligations and giving them the unfettered and unconstrained opportunity to expand the deployment of their new missile system. The U.S. does not have the assets in place to defend against Russia's new missile, nor is it anywhere close to developing, manufacturing, and deploying a similar system that would operate as a counter to it.

So the President is shredding the INF treaty without any credible alternative. It is not just bad policy; it is dangerous to European security. The path the administration has chosen leaves our allies vulnerable to Russian aggression, and at this moment, there is no recourse for the United States or our allies.

It is within this vein of poor foreign policy planning that I want to discuss a second issue related to INF. In 2021, the United States will face the decision whether to extend New START. I am extremely concerned that President Trump has no appreciation or understating of the importance of arms control treaties and that this deficiency will lead him to abandon all limitations on U.S-Russian nuclear forces.

We have historically negotiated and entered into agreements with our adversaries recognizing that we are dealing with hostile powers that cannot be trusted. We build in metrics that account for a probability of efforts to deceive and dodge. In high stakes agreements, provisions outlining U.S. intelligence verification and compliance are essential. In the universe of arms control agreements with Russia, we conduct on-site inspections of military bases and facilities, and we require data exchanges in order track the status and makeup of their nuclear forces.

In assessing the value of an arms control agreement, we consider whether our participation in the agreement advances our national security interests.

Let's be clear: The New START treaty clearly advances vital U.S. national security interests. Through our inspection regime, we are able to verify that Russia is adhering to the limitations the treaty places on the size of Russia's strategic nuclear arsenal. Through our data exchanges and our verification regimes, we gain extremely valuable insights into the size and location of their nuclear forces.

At a time when Russia is engaged in malign behavior all over the world and Putin is pressing to reassert Russian power, it is critical we maintain key leverage points to protect against a revisionist Russia. New START is one of those points, and I urge my colleagues and the administration that, in light of ongoing Russian compliance with New START, we must extend the treaty for an additional 5 years.

I strongly urge the administration try a new approach and develop a coherent strategy to stabilize our arms control regime. The relationship with the Russian Federation remains a challenge, but we must address these arms control issues and negotiate a durable agreement that ensures stability in our nuclear forces.

Neither an unconstrained nuclear arms race nor blind faith in arms control agreements serve U.S. national security interest. American security is best served through a strong, credible deterrent that operates within a legally binding, stable, and constrained arms control environment.

S.1

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today with a sense of great disappointment, disappointment in what my colleague, the senior Senator from Florida and the Republican leader have done with the bill that was before us. Because they have taken a bill that had broad—maybe unanimous—bipartisan support and tried to turn it into a political weapon. As a result, they are doing a great disservice to the American people and to all of us who value the tradition of strong bipartisan support for our friend and ally, Israel. I also opposed Senator MCCONNELL's amendment to S.1 because it contains language that could require the perpetual presence of American forces in Afghanistan and Syria.

I am a cosponsor of the original bill S.2497 entitled the United States-Israel Security Assistance Authorization Act of 2018. It is a bill to codify the memorandum of understanding between the United States and Israel, that was forged under President Obama and which provides Israel with $38 billion in security assistance over the next 10 years. This includes $33 billion in foreign military financing funds to Israel and $5 billion in missile defense assistance for the Iron Dome, David's Sling, and the Arrow–3.

That is a lot of money when you consider the many priorities we have here at home and abroad. In fact, more than one-half of our entire global foreign military financing, the security assistance we provide to all of our partners and allies around the world, goes to Israel.

In my view, it is an important investment, it is an important investment to support our friend and democratic ally Israel from the many threats it faces in a very dangerous neighborhood—threats from Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, Hamas, and many others. We need to make sure Israel maintains a strong military edge to defend itself, and that is why you have strong bipartisan support for that original bill.

But then the Republican leader took a bill with broad bipartisan support for Israel and added a provision designed to retaliate against American citizens who express their disagreement with certain policies of the government of Israel by participating in certain boycott activities. Specifically, the Senator from Florida added a provision that encourages States throughout the country to pass laws to punish American citizens who choose to protest the settlement policies of the government of Prime Minister Netanyahu by either boycotting products made in Israeli settlements in the West Bank or by not otherwise engaging in commerce with such settlements.

Now—and I want to make this clear—while I disagree with some of the policies adopted by the Netanyahu government in Israel, I do not—I do not in any way support a boycott as a method of expressing those disagreements.

But—let me be equally clear on this point—I will fiercely defend the constitutional right of any American citizen to express his or her views in such a peaceful way if they so choose. Just as I would support the right of every American to engage in other political boycotts to peacefully express their political views without fear of being punished by their government.

The Senator from Florida wants to use the power of the State to punish American citizens who disagree with him on this issue. It is right here in the bill. Let me read some of the relevant parts.

A state may adopt and enforce measures . . . to restrict contracting by the state for goods and services with—any entity that . . . knowingly engages in . . . boycott activity . . . intended to limit commercial relations with Israel or persons doing business in Israel or Israeli-controlled territories for purposes of imposing policy positions on, the Government of Israel.

So how does this new provision encourage States to retaliate against American citizens? It encourages States to pass laws to deny their citizens the right to bid on any State contracts unless those citizens sign an oath stating that they do not or will not engage in any boycott of Israel, including any boycott relating the sale or purchase of goods or services from Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

Think about that. Let's say you are an American citizen living in my State of Maryland. Let's say you own a computer consulting business and you happen to disagree with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's policy of expanding