

But while the technological advances of the last couple of decades have been tremendous, there is a lot more to come. The 5G mobile broadband technology will deliver speeds that are 100 times faster than what today's technology can deliver. It will be vastly more responsive than 4G technology, and it will be able to connect 100 times the number of devices that can be connected with 4G.

It is hard to imagine. After all, our devices today are pretty fast and responsive as it is, but 5G will be much, much faster. That means near-instant responsiveness from your phone and computer, but it means a lot more than that.

So 5G will enable massive breakthroughs in healthcare, transportation, agriculture, and other key industries, and 5G will pave the way for automated vehicles, which have the potential to dramatically reduce traffic injuries and fatalities. It will facilitate surgical innovation and new ways to treat chronic illnesses and to heal injuries.

It will allow precision agriculture to take off, empowering America's farmers and ranchers to make better decisions about field management and substantially increase their crop yields. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that precision agriculture will reduce farmers' operational costs by up to \$25 per acre and increase farmers' yields by up to 70 percent by the year 2050.

The technology for 5G is already here, but it requires more than simply having the technology to make 5G a reality. In order to deploy 5G, wireless providers need access to sufficient spectrum, and they need to be able to deploy the infrastructure needed to support the technology in a reasonable and timely manner.

Last year, the President signed the bipartisan MOBILE NOW Act. It was legislation that I had introduced to help secure adequate spectrum for 5G technology.

Yesterday, along with Senator SCHATZ, I reintroduced the STREAMLINE Small Cell Deployment Act to address the other part of the 5G equation, and that is infrastructure. The 5G technology will require not just traditional cell phone towers but small antennas called small cells that can often be attached to existing infrastructure like utility poles or buildings.

Everybody has seen the cell phone towers rising a couple hundred feet into the air. This is going to be a different type of technology.

I was encouraged to see the Federal Communications Commission under Chairman Pai's leadership modernize its regulations on the approval for small cells, but more work can and should be done. That is where the STREAMLINE Act comes in.

My STREAMLINE Act updates current law to better reflect emerging technology. It will expedite the deployment of small cells while respecting

the role of State and local governments in making deployment decisions. Importantly, it will make it more affordable to bring 5G to rural areas by addressing the costs of small cell deployment.

Too often, rural areas, like those in my home State of South Dakota, have lagged behind when it comes to getting the most modern broadband technology. It is important that we remove barriers to deployment in rural areas so that rural communities can have the same access to the benefits of 5G.

In addition to fostering tremendous technological breakthroughs in everything from agriculture to energy, 5G has the potential to add \$500 billion to the economy and to create millions of new jobs. But in order to achieve those economic benefits, we need to stay at the head of the 5G revolution.

The United States lagged behind other countries in deploying 2G and 3G technology, which had real economic consequences. Europe, for example, took the lead in 2G and cornered most of the market in sales of networking equipment and telecom hardware. As 4G emerged, however, the United States' wireless industry stepped forward, investing billions in 4G deployment. The government also took steps to support the wireless industry, freeing up spectrum and making it easier to deploy the necessary infrastructure.

That is what we need to do again today. If we want to stay at the head of the race to 5G, the government needs to make sure that wireless companies have access to the necessary spectrum and the ability to efficiently deploy small cell infrastructure.

While we pursue licensed spectrum for 5G, we must also be mindful of the critical role that unlicensed spectrum plays in the development of 5G and throughout the communications landscape. Wi-Fi operating on unlicensed spectrum is responsible for a tremendous and growing amount of the data transmitted in our homes and offices and will play an increasing role in the future.

Identifying spectrum resources, not just for the next few years, but for the next 10 years and beyond is essential if we are to retain American leadership. My MOBILE NOW Act was an important step forward in increasing access to both licensed and unlicensed spectrum, but there is more work to be done. While we have made good progress on securing low- and high-band spectrum, China and South Korea are far ahead of us in opening up mid-band spectrum for 5G.

If we don't want to lose out to China and South Korea on 5G, we need to substantially increase the amount of mid-band spectrum available to U.S. companies. And, of course, we need to focus on streamlining the deployment of small cells through measures like the STREAMLINE Act, so that companies can get the necessary infrastructure for 5G in place. The STREAMLINE Act would substantially expedite the de-

ployment of 5G technology, and I hope the Senate will take up my bill in the near future.

Americans have always been innovators and pioneers. We have been on the cutting edge of more than one technological revolution, and we can lead the world again in 5G. I look forward to continuing to work to ensure that U.S. companies have the framework they need to carry America into the 5G future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT of Florida). The Senator from Utah.

MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. ROMNEY. Mr. President, I have been a Member of this body for several months now, and I would like to offer a few observations about the experience.

I had been told that I might not like it here. Having previously been a Governor, some friends thought I might find the pace a little too slow and decision making too diffuse and cumbersome, but that has not been the case.

My committee assignments are interesting and the work is important, and while few bills actually become law, the fact that both political parties must reach consensus for a bill to pass reinforces the ties that bind our Republic.

Given the public passion of our politics these days, I had also presumed that the atmosphere here would vary between prickly and hostile, but the truth is that Senators on both sides of the aisle are remarkably friendly and collegial once the cameras are off.

I have now met privately with 68 of my fellow Senators. Like them, I came here in part because I believe my life experience could help us confront our national challenges. I also believe that the values and policies practiced in Utah can inform national debates. Our State has the fastest job growth in the country. It balances its budget every year. It has the country's most highly educated workforce.

It is a great privilege to represent the people of Utah in the Senate. I am humbled by the history that has been made here, by the character of the patriots whose sculptures adorn our halls, and, of course, by the great sacrifice made to construct the Capitol of the greatest Nation on Earth. To serve here is to be reminded daily of the history and greatness of this blessed country.

The American character has been distinct from our very beginning. Alexis de Tocqueville observed that Americans had fashioned a culture different from any other he had encountered.

Just a few weeks ago, I attended the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Summit in Utah. In his keynote address, historian Jon Meacham observed that, in a number of ways, that endeavor revealed some of the distinct elements of the national

character. President Abraham Lincoln signed the project's enabling legislation on the eve of the Civil War. The country was divided as never before or since, and the President was preoccupied with preserving the Union. But despite the gathering storm, he had both the foresight to see the impact of a transcontinental railroad and the confidence to believe it actually could be constructed. We Americans are drawn to visionary endeavors, and we rarely lack the confidence needed to undertake them.

It is difficult from today's vantage point to appreciate the extent of the project's engineering and construction challenges. Some have even called it the greatest engineering triumph of the 19th century. Tunnels were blasted through the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, at first only with black powder. There were no hotels or restaurants along the way, no local sources of energy or power tools. On some days, the progress through Granite Mountain was measured in inches.

The cost was prohibitive, particularly for a country preparing for a war, so Congress made it a public-private partnership. Two companies—one from the West, another from the East—were each granted tracks of land commensurate with the amount of track they laid. Fierce competition ensued, each company wanting to obtain the most land possible.

There were many who opposed the idea of granting public land to private companies that stood to make fortunes on the lands they received. There were others who thought the project was the height of folly—too expensive, too dangerous, and unnecessary. After all, it was already possible to go from New York to California in just 6 weeks by land and 2 by sea. But having studied and debated the matter, Lincoln and Congress defied public criticism and did what they believed was in the best interest of the country.

The construction crews numbered in the thousands. Fifteen thousand Chinese immigrants worked for the Central Railroad that began in Sacramento, and roughly 7,000 Irish immigrants labored for the Union Pacific Railroad coming from the East. In time, veterans of the Civil War joined the crews, as did several thousand Mormons from Utah.

The work conditions were brutal. Somewhere in the neighborhood of 500 to 1,000 men died. The achievement was also marred by failures of character. The promoters were oblivious to the rights and needs of Native Americans and to the plight of the immigrant workers. When the railroad was completed, Chinese laborers were denied citizenship. There can be a blindness in the human mind that is clouded by ambition. Despite these unfavorable and unpardonable failings, the Transcontinental Railroad was a grand achievement. It joined two great oceans and overcame the challenge of a nation spread across vast distances and foreboding lands.

Intrinsic in the American mind is the conviction that we can overcome any challenge. In the years since then, we have achieved greater marvels and overcome greater challenges. Seventy-five years ago, brave Americans landed on the beaches in Normandy and began the process of liberating a continent. Americans turned the tide of two world wars, overcame a global depression, conquered deadly, debilitating disease, and walked on the surface of the Moon.

We who have inherited this incomparably accomplished Nation might wonder if we will face challenges as daunting and opportunities as transformational as theirs. The decisions each generation of Americans makes affect the course of history and profoundly impact our prosperity and our freedom. We face such decisions today.

Eight years ago, I argued that Russia was our No. 1 geopolitical adversary. Today, China is poised to assume that distinction. Russia continues its malign effort, of course—violating treaties, invading sovereign nations, pursuing nuclear superiority, interfering in elections, spreading lies and hate, protecting the world's worse actors from justice, and promoting authoritarianism—but Russia is on a declining path. Its population is shrinking, and its industrial base is lagging. John McCain famously opined that Russia is a gas station parading as a country. As it falls further behind, we must expect Russia's inevitable desperation to lead to further and more aberrant conduct.

Unlike Russia, China is on a rising path. When it was admitted to the World Trade Organization, the expectation was that China would embrace the rules of the global order, including eventually respect for human rights. It has done the opposite—imprisoning millions in reeducation camps, brutally repressing dissent, censoring the media and internet, seizing land and sea that don't belong to it, and flouting the global rules of free and fair competition. Like Russia, China promotes authoritarianism and protects brutal dictators like Kim Jong Un and Nicolas Maduro.

Today, we mark the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre. That day, cries for freedom were brutally crushed. Since then, China has pursued a relentless course to smother the kinds of hopes and dreams that filled that square 30 years ago.

It is possible that China might someday experience a discontinuity or another uprising that will change its course. But barring that, because China's population is almost four times our size, its economy should eventually dwarf ours, and because economic advantage enables military advantage, China's military could even pass by ours as well. It is possible that freedom itself would be in jeopardy. If we fail to act now, that possibility may become reality.

I believe we have two imperatives: First, strengthen ourselves and, second, stop China's predation.

In the long run, for a country like ours, with a relatively small population, to rival a country like China, with its much larger population, we must join our economic and military might with that of other free nations. Alliances are absolutely essential to America's security, to our future. I can't state that more plainly. Our alliances are invaluable to us and to the cause of freedom. We should strengthen our alliances, not dismiss or begrudge them. We should enhance our trade with allies, not disrupt them, and coordinate all the more closely our security and our defense with them.

It is in the most vital interest of the United States to see a strong NATO, a strong Europe, stronger ties with the free nations of Asia, the Pacific, the subcontinent, and with every free country. We need to hold our friends closer, not neglect them or drive them away. These alliances are a key advantage we have over China. America has many friends; China has very few.

We have another advantage: innovation. The country that leads in innovation will lead in prosperity. China knows that as well as we do. After all, China began its economic rise by stealing our technologies. But today, China has become an impressive innovator all by itself. Last year, China received almost as many global patents as did the United States. It is far ahead of us in 5G. It is on track to surpass us in artificial intelligence, and artificial intelligence is a general purpose technology that will have systemic impact on the world.

It is critical that we protect our technology and propel the innovation we need in the future. Well resourced and guided, our great research universities, combined with the productivity inherent in free enterprise, are capable of reasserting America's innovation leadership.

One dimension of American innovation is often underestimated, however. America is a magnet for the world's best and brightest. They want to come here, not China. Over half of the 25 most valuable high-tech companies in America were founded by immigrants or by their children. It is very much in our national interest to keep attracting the world's best minds to America.

We also need to tame our national debt and deficit if we are to remain strong. The Federal Government took in about \$3 trillion last year and spent about \$4 trillion. Adding a trillion dollars every year to the debt means that in 10 years, we would be spending almost as much on interest as we do on our military. America won't be strong enough to defend its interests and leadership if it strains under the burden of crippling financial debt.

In addition to strengthening America, we must also confront China's aggression. China has focused its ambition most acutely on trade. Flouting global rules and conventions, China has corrupted the free market. China views companies in countries that play by

the rules as the proverbial fish in a barrel. Too often, we just ignore China's aggression, genuflecting before the throne of free markets. But you don't have a free market if the biggest player is allowed to cheat.

China's cheating takes many forms. For many years, it held down the value of its currency to make its products artificially inexpensive, intending to drive competitors from other countries out of business. More recently, China has debased its currency to partially compensate for tariffs imposed on its goods. Today, so-called industrial policy is China's primary weapon of choice. China subsidizes a company by loaning it funds at submarket rates, by forgiving loans, by providing free research and development, or simply by allowing it to use intellectual property stolen from other nations.

Subsidy is even easier to hide when the company is owned by the government itself. There are 140,000 state-owned enterprises in China, accounting for 40 percent of its industrial assets. Profitability, return on capital, and repayment of debt are mostly irrelevant in such state-owned enterprises. They can employ predatory pricing—entering a foreign market by pricing a product well below its cost, driving domestic competitors out of business. When an American company does that, it is prosecuted under antitrust laws, but proving a Chinese product is priced below cost is extremely difficult given the lack of reliable cost data.

China's industrial policies are killing and debilitating businesses throughout the world.

Look, I am a free market, free trade guy, but free markets require rules to enforce honest competition. Slavishly accepting China's cheating as a dynamic of a free market, competitive workplace makes no sense at all. The President is right to use tariffs to crack down on China's theft of intellectual property, but when it comes to China's predatory industrial policy, the cheating will not end. We need to counter it directly.

Classically, a country has several tools to counter a predatory competitor. It can ban all or certain of its products. We did this with the Soviets during the Cold War. It can employ counterbalancing subsidies. It can require high levels of local content. And, of course, it can align with other nations to establish strict rules of conduct, which it then vigorously and swiftly enforces. All or some mix of these is needed.

As we confront China's aggression, we must also endeavor to convince it to turn back from the road of economic, military, and geopolitical conflict upon which it has embarked. Joining the other nations of the world in genuinely fair and free trade and in respect for the sovereignty of its trading partners and neighbors is very much in China's, America's, and the world's interest. China is not yet a geopolitical foe, but its actions over the last sev-

eral years have brought it right up to that line.

What I have said today won't come as a surprise to leaders here in Washington. The forms of China's aggression are widely understood by members of the administration, Members of Congress, and foreign affairs experts on both sides of the aisle. But, to date, our national response has largely been ad hoc or short-term or piecemeal. It is past time for us to conduct and construct a comprehensive strategy to meet the challenge of an ambitious and increasingly hostile China.

I said at the outset of my remarks that there are two dimensions needed in a strategy to preserve American leadership: First, strengthen America, and second, confront China's predation. There is a third dimension. We must alert the American people to the threat we face and unite them to the greatest extent possible in our response. In the past, an act of war or blustering threats by hostile actors have united us. But don't expect to see the Chinese President pound his shoe on the counter or shout that he is going to bury us, as Nikita Khrushchev did long ago. No, China intends to overcome us just like the cook who kills the frog in a pot of boiling water, smiling and cajoling as it slowly turns up the military and economic heat.

The disappearance of traditional media and the emergence of social media have made it more difficult to unite the country. Conspiring voices online prey on the human tendency to diminish the dignity and worth of people of different views, of different races, religions, or colors. Contempt rather than empathy is a growing feature in our politics and media. Each of us must make an effort to shut out the voices of hate and fear, to ignore divisive and alarming conspiracies, and to be more respectful, more empathetic of our fellow Americans. And when it comes to cooling the rhetoric and encouraging unity, there is no more powerful medium than the bully pulpit of the President of the United States.

Bringing a nation of 330 million people together in a shared effort is a greater challenge these days than bringing 2 coasts together with a railroad. But now, as then, national unity demands that the voices of leaders draw upon the better angels of our nature. They must call upon the distinctive qualities of our national character evidenced time and again in American history. We must reaffirm the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

Jon Meacham said it well: The greatest words ever originally written in English may be these: "All Men are created equal." That founding conviction propelled America to become the greatest Nation on Earth. No people have done more to assuage poverty, to combat tyranny, or to advance the God-given right of every woman and man to be free. That is still our common cause, our enduring legacy, and

our promise to generations unborn. Only America can lead that endeavor, but only with honor, with integrity, and with the combined strength of the friends of freedom will we succeed.

America remains the best hope of Earth and the champion of freedom. May God bless us with the courage and wisdom to keep that sacred trust.

I yield the floor.

(The remarks of Ms. CANTWELL pertaining to the introduction of S. 1703 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. CANTWELL. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this Senate Chamber has had a lot of historic debates. We have considered legislation of great seriousness and historic importance.

I have been on the floor of the Senate when we voted on going to war. I can't think of a more serious responsibility that a Member of the Senate might have. You know that even at the end of a good day, innocent people are going to die, and you have to cast a vote as to whether America should make that decision.

I have been here when we passed legislation that really was transformative in terms of the future of this country. After we went through the great recession in 2008, President Obama stepped up and said that we have to do something about reforming Wall Street, and we did. We spent months in committee hearings and brought to the floor a bill that is characterized as Dodd-Frank to change Wall Street and to make sure we never went through that kind of economic crisis again.

I was here when we considered the Affordable Care Act 10 years ago. That debate went on for over a year, amendment after amendment, change after change. We were addressing an issue that affected virtually every single American family, if not directly, then indirectly.

Those are the types of things that have been debated on the floor of this Chamber. But look at it now. It is empty. It is so underutilized that for hours and hours each business day, we come to the floor to make little speeches. At best, we are going to have a vote or two on another nomination from the Republican side, usually a controversial nomination, and that is it. That is it.

When you think of all of the possibilities of what we could do in the U.S. Senate Chamber for the good of this country, it seems like a terrible waste of space and a terrible waste of time. Men and women who made great personal sacrifices to run for the U.S. Senate and who serve in this Chamber find themselves in an empty Chamber, by and large, with nothing going on.

If you want to see some action, switch your C-SPAN channel over to the House of Representatives. In that