

Alana, you are indeed one of those elite few. Thank you for your service to Minnesota, and thank you for what you will continue to do for many years ahead to move forward the hard but precious work of improving people's lives.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I speak in leader time.

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

TROOP DEPLOYMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, the Defense Department announced that 1,000 additional troops would be deployed to the Middle East. This is the second deployment of 1,000 or more troops in the past 30 days, ostensibly to deal with Iran's increased activity in the region.

Despite these two announcements, the President has yet to address the Nation about these developments. The President has yet to articulate a strategy about American involvement in the region. He has yet to send a single military commander to testify before the Armed Services Committee. And he has yet to explain what his policy of "maximum pressure" on Iran is supposed to achieve. All we have heard is the Secretary of State, our chief diplomat, rattling the sabers of war.

As U.S. troops again prepare to deploy to the Middle East, this administration has an obligation to explain to the American people exactly what is happening and why. If they have a case, they must make it public. Americans are rightly skeptical and tired of endless wars in the Middle East—a reticence that many on the Republican side don't seem to share. Americans know that smaller actions have a tendency to escalate into larger actions even when there is no congressional authority and no check.

The administration has offered to send various officials to give classified briefings, but, frankly, that is not nearly good enough. We have learned a hard truth from our experience in Iraq—that the drums of war start beating behind closed doors. The President must make his pitch to the Nation instead of another closed-door meeting with Senators. As the Commander in Chief, he owes that to every American but especially to the American servicemembers, and their families, whom he is sending into the Middle East.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, Leader MCCONNELL has indicated he plans to have the Senate consider legislation next week on the administration's request for supplemental appropriations to handle migration at our southern border. As I have said many times, Democrats want to provide the necessary resources to secure our borders and ensure that everyone who arrives there is treated hu-

manely; however, the sheer chaos of this administration's policy, the sheer mismanagement, the erratic nature when the President says one thing one day and another the next, mean that we must be precise and careful about how we do it.

The fact is very simple: President Trump's immigration policies are inhumane, erratic, fleeting, and impossible to carry out at the same time.

Right now, on the Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, the Trump administration has authorized a for-profit company to build a temporary shelter for migrants that is little better than an internment camp. We have heard routinely about the separation of children from parents, about the horrible conditions at the DHS facilities, about children—children—in cages. That is as un-American as anything.

This past week, I read in the New York Times the story of a 4-month-old boy. It wrenched my heart. He was separated from his parents—a cleavage so severe at an age so young that the boy has suffered a great trauma. He is now more than a year and a half old. He is back in his home country of Romania with his parents. He still can't walk on his own. He still hasn't spoken.

What are we doing to these innocent children? What are we doing? Stories like these are heart-wrenching; the policies that create them, unconscionable; and so often, the policies are announced according to the President's whim. Every day, the President seems to have a different crazy idea, often contradicting his previous thought—a national emergency declaration to build a wall, tariffs for Mexico, shutting down the border entirely.

Last night, the President tweeted that ICE was planning mass immigration arrests and removal. The President seems to just invent a new policy in the morning by tweet with the sole purpose of rallying his base.

Ideas like deporting millions of immigrants inside our border have been dismissed by government officials in charge of immigration as unrealistic. The very people the President puts in charge say this policy can't happen. It doesn't bother him. Maybe he was doing this to talk about it at his rally tonight, his election rally in Florida. But I will tell you something. He tried this before the 2018 election—big crisis at the border. It didn't seem to work. What appeals to a base—a rather narrow base of the President's supporters does not appeal to the American people when it comes to being erratic, inhumane, harsh, and ineffective on immigration.

Members of both parties should be weary—wary—about giving the administration additional funding if it is not going to be used to secure our border or provide better conditions for migrants and asylum seekers, especially children.

Again, just remember what the President has called for in the last few months, none of which have happened

and none of which have curbed the flow at the border—so many different things, none of which make sense. Remember the national emergency declaration to build a wall. Remember the tariffs with Mexico. Remember the shutting down of the border entirely. And now mass immigration arrests and removal. It is a policy that is erratic, unsuccessful, ineffective, and maybe worst of all, inhumane—even taking a 4-month-old from his parents and leaving that child with a trauma probably for the rest of his life.

We Democrats have a proposal that is common sense, that would actually do things. At one point, the President seemed to support it, but that was fleeting like every one of his other proposals on immigration. Here is what we propose. I hope the President is listening, and I hope, at least, our Republican colleagues are listening, because we can actually get something done.

We propose to provide more immigration judges at the border to reduce the backlog in cases.

We provide for the allowance of asylum seekers to apply for asylum within their home countries. Why are these people fleeing? The President would have Americans believe they are all drug dealers and MS-13 members. There are a few of those, and they shouldn't be let in, and they shouldn't be given any mercy. Yet the vast majority of these people—you have seen the pictures—is made up of parents and children. Sometimes their daughters have been threatened with rape by gangs or their sons have been murdered or they are going to burn down their houses or burn down their businesses if they don't go along with the gangs. Who wouldn't flee? Who wouldn't? So let them apply for asylum and not have to pay the coyotes and not have them make this dangerous trek of 1,000 miles from their own countries. It is a good proposal. At one point, the President entertained it. Let's do it.

Finally, we provide security assistance to Central American countries in order to crack down on the drug cartels, the violent gangs, the corruption, and the lawlessness.

These are the things we should be doing—having more immigration judges to reduce the backlog; allowing for asylum seekers to apply for asylum in their home countries; and providing security assistance to crack down on the drug cartels, violent gangs, and the coyotes.

Yesterday, unfortunately, the State Department did the opposite. It announced it would cut off all further security assistance, including over \$400 million of already obligated assistance to Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, until the countries reduce the number of migrants coming to the United States. Talk about cutting off your nose to spite your face.

What an insane, insane new policy idea from the President—even crazier than some of the others. The Trump administration is actually doing the