

about that what Putin has done is wrong," Reid said.

He added that it was unclear what the "right wing" Republicans attacking Obama were seeking from the president.

"Did they think that he should do an Iraq move maybe?" Reid said. "I don't understand what they're saying. I think that the cautious direction of the president has been very good in Ukraine."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, since 2017, I have continued reminding everyone that Putin is not our friend. Russia is going to continue trying to meddle. We need a comprehensive strategy to contest Russian aggression, and alliances like NATO are critical for standing up to our adversaries.

Once more, for good measure, I ask unanimous consent that the news article dated August 15, 2018, entitled "U.S. Senate's top Republican likens Russia to 'old Soviet Union'" be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[August 15, 2018]

US SENATE'S TOP REPUBLICAN LIKENS RUSSIA TO 'OLD SOVIET UNION'

(By Joe Gould)

WASHINGTON—Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., isn't ready to get cozy with Russia, comparing it to "the old Soviet Union" on Tuesday.

A month after the Helsinki summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, at which Trump discredited U.S. intelligence and American policies isolating Moscow, the powerful Senate leader showed he was on a separate track.

"The Russians are not our friends. They try to create problems in every way they can," McConnell said in a news conference at Fort Knox, Kentucky, set up to tout the \$716 billion National Defense Authorization Act that Trump signed into law Monday.

"I think the Russians are acting like the old Soviet Union used to act," McConnell said, pointing to its alleged meddling in U.S. and European elections and its 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. (Louisville-based Spectrum News posted video of the presser.)

Without mentioning it directly, McConnell displayed his differences with Trump and Sen. Rand Paul, the junior senator from Kentucky and an outlier in the Senate when it comes to Moscow. Paul, who visited Russia this month, said the politics in America around the issues are poisoning the chances for cross-Atlantic dialogue.

Trump's openness toward Russia has fueled tensions over the separation of powers. Trump issued a signing statement for the NDAA that claimed some provisions mandating tough action on Russia would actually impinge on the powers of the executive branch.

"This signing statement is troubling because, yet again, the President is showing the world he cannot be trusted when it comes to standing by U.S. commitments and promoting our interests over—his own," the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's ranking member, Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J., said in a statement. He called on Trump to "unequivocally stand strong for the United States and our allies and against Kremlin aggression."

The Senate has taken a few bipartisan shots at Trump on Russia, voting overwhelmingly to affirm support of NATO and unanimously to oppose giving the Kremlin

access to U.S. officials. Still, Senate GOP leaders blocked a bipartisan measure to reject Putin's denial of election interference, mandate immediate enactment of sanctions passed by Congress last year and ask Senate committees to hold hearings into the summit's private meeting between Putin and Trump.

On Tuesday, McConnell lauded the NDAA's aid for Fort Knox (home to Army Human Resources Command), its authorized end-strength boost, and its recognition of America's tense relationships with Russia and China.

"It would have been denying reality and in a sense putting our head in the sand not to have a significant increase in military spending," McConnell said, acknowledging Defense Secretary Jim Mattis' advocacy to Trump and Congress for added spending.

"In fact, we gave the Department of Defense exactly what they asked for," McConnell added. The Senate leader also praised Trump's tough stance against China on trade.

"We'd rather not be adversaries, but we don't have a perfect relationship either," McConnell said of Beijing. "The Chinese have become more aggressive on the military side, which has been unusual for them in the past."

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I don't normally take the time to respond to critics in the media when they have no clue what they are talking about, but this modern-day McCarthyism is toxic and damaging because of the way it warps our entire public discourse. Facts matter. Details matter. History matters. And if our Nation is losing its ability to debate public policy without screaming about treason, that really matters.

In the middle of the 20th century, the original McCarthyism hurt America's strength and diminished our standing in the Cold War by dividing us against ourselves and letting lies, innuendo, and baseless accusations crowd out reasonable politics. The frenetic politicized witch hunt distracted from legitimate efforts to contest the Soviet Union, including more sober efforts to root out real Soviet agents in our midsts. In short, McCarthyism did the Russian's work for them. McCarthyism did the work for the Russians.

Now, here we are in 2019. Again, Putin and the Russians seek to provoke fear and division in our country, to undermine faith in our institutions, to exacerbate our political divisions until we tear ourselves apart, and, once again, it seems there are some who blindly take the bait.

American pundits are calling an American official treasonous because of a policy disagreement. If anything is an asset to the Russians, it is disgusting behavior like that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2019—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 165, H.R. 3877.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 165, H.R. 3877, a bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, to establish a congressional budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, to temporarily suspend the debt limit, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk for the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 3877, a bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, to establish a congressional budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021, to temporarily suspend the debt limit, and for other purposes.

Lamar Alexander, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally, John Cornyn, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Susan M. Collins, Tom Cotton, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker, John Thune, Bill Cassidy, Richard Burr, John Barrasso, Rob Portman, Lisa Murkowski, Mitch McConnell.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 402.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Kelly Craft, of Kentucky, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Kelly Craft, of Kentucky, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Lamar Alexander, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally, John Cornyn, Pat Roberts, Mike Rounds, Susan M. Collins, Tom Cotton, Roy Blunt, Roger F. Wicker,