

Since then, many NATO partners have fought side by side with us in Afghanistan, in Iraq, and in Syria.

We are not—and need not be—the world’s policeman. Winning this long war, like the Cold War, will require sustained efforts and contributions not only from the United States but from our allies and especially from local partners. For example, in Afghanistan the vast majority of the fighting is done by local security forces, but we must always remember the global coalition to defeat the terrorists will not lead itself.

So, today, as we remember the tragedies of the past, we must renew our commitment to leading the fight for a better future. Today, may the memory of the nearly 3,000 victims who lost their lives on this day in 2001 serve as a lasting reminder of what is at stake in the fight against terrorism and steel our resolve to continue the hard, necessary work of defending our homeland. May we always keep foremost in our thoughts all the U.S. servicemembers, intelligence officers, diplomats, and first responders who have given their lives in pursuit of our Nation’s security.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the disposition of the Akard nomination, the majority leader and Democratic leader both have a minute to speak and the Senate then observe a moment of silence in remembrance of the events of September 11, 2001.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAMER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 18 years ago today, on a cloudless Tuesday morning, my city, our country, our world changed forever. In the span of a few hours, the Twin Towers fell, the Pentagon was hit, and smoke rose from an empty field in Pennsylvania. More than 3,000 souls were taken from us that day.

I knew some of them: a guy I played basketball with in high school, a businessman who helped me on my way up,

a firefighter I did blood drives with. It was one of the bloodiest days on American soil since the Civil War.

Each year, we pause to remember that awful day. We mourn those we lost, but we also recognize, in the aftermath of September 11, the resiliency of the American people. The resiliency of New Yorkers shone through one of the darkest hours in our country.

Looking back remains difficult even after 18 years. I ride my bike through the city of New York and every fifth or sixth street is named after a firefighter or a police officer who died, as are parts of Brooklyn, Bay Ridge, and places like that. I will never forget. I think of it all the time.

The day after, when President Bush sent Senator Clinton and me to go up to New York in planes, we were the only planes in the sky. We were in an airliner that had us surrounded by F-18s and F-16s. When we landed, we went down to the site. The smell of death and burnt flesh was in the air. This I will never forget, a thousand people lined up—no one knew who had lived and who had died—with little signs: Have you seen my mother, Mary? Have you seen my son, Bill?

That stays with me.

I remember the generosity of New Yorkers. A man who owned a shoe store just north of the Towers gave out free shoes to everybody who was fleeing. Many of them had lost their shoes in the long trek down the stairs.

I remember the valor of the first responders who rushed to the Towers. I remember a firefighter from Staten Island, based in Brooklyn, who went to his firehouse, put his full gear on, and ran through the tunnel with about 60, 70 pounds of gear on. It was his day off, but he knew he was called. He went up the stairs of the World Trade Center and was crushed when the Twin Towers collapsed. So there is a lot.

Another way I think of this every day, as I am sure you have noticed, is that I always wear this flag on my lapel. I called on Americans to wear the flag the day after my having witnessed the site, and I have worn this flag every day since. Every time I look at it, I think of those who were lost, and I think of the valor of New Yorkers and of the American people.

For the first responders, this 9/11 carries additional significance. A few months ago, some of the heroes that day were here in Washington to celebrate the permanent reauthorization of the Victim Compensation Fund. I thank the first responders who came to Washington and helped to secure this funding, especially those who are no longer with us—James Zadroga, Luis Alvarez, my friend Ray Pfeifer. Wherever they are, I hope they are looking down with the knowledge that their brothers and sisters are being taken care of.

God bless those good heroes. May God continue to bless this resilient Nation.

Later this morning, I will return to the floor with the Republican leader and my colleagues as we will respect a moment of silence in memory of September 11.

APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on a different subject, I return this morning to the topic of appropriations.

We have until the end of this work period to figure out a way to continue government funding, and there is good talk of a short-term continuing resolution so the government doesn’t run out of money on September 30. Yet the larger question is how this Chamber is going to proceed or not proceed with the 12 appropriations bills that fund our government.

Despite many disagreements between the majority and minority in this Chamber, the Senate has been able to produce several bipartisan budget deals even in the Trump era. The reason we have been able to do this is that both parties have been committed to working together throughout each stage of the appropriations process. Bipartisanship—appropriations can only work with it and will not work without it.

Earlier this summer, the Democrats and the Republicans negotiated the broad outlines of a budget deal in good faith. We allocated the 302(a)s and came up with a side agreement. After that, the very first step in the appropriations process is to agree, in a bipartisan way, with the allocations for the 12 subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee. That is what we did in 2018, and I believe it passed the committee unanimously—or maybe with one dissenting vote. It was passed unanimously on a bipartisan basis. The Appropriations Committee passed those 302(b) allocations 31 to 0. That is how we thought it was going to work now, but already we are running into trouble with those allocations this time around.

The Republican majority on the Appropriations Committee has unilaterally proposed putting in an additional \$12 billion for the President’s border wall, taking away \$5 billion of funding for Health and Human Services—desperately needed programs like healthcare and fighting opioid addiction and cancer research—and putting it into the wall. This is without our OK, without our acknowledgment, and without our acceptance. The Republican majority also reprogrammed funding from other sources and backfilled money the President proposes to pilfer for military construction, which has affected, I believe, 30 States.

My Republican colleagues and my friend the Republican leader know very well this will not fly with Senate Democrats. We are not going to vote for a budget that is partisan and is attempting to be jammed down our throats. It puts an additional \$12 billion into the wall? Forget that. So here

we are already—at step No. 1 in the appropriations process—and the spirit of bipartisanship that is necessary for this work might be melting away.

I just warn my Republican colleagues that this is not a way to produce a budget. This is the same path they tried to go down last year. They shut down the government and then had to walk it back. We all know what a partisan process looks like. President Trump caused the longest government shutdown in American history by demanding funding for a border wall and then by shutting down the government when Congress didn't give it to him. Let's not go down that exact path again 9 months later.

There is still time to get the process back on track. The Republican majority should sit down with the Democrats on the committee and, in good faith, come up with the 302(b) allocations and come up with the order by which we bring bills to the floor. Then we can get this done. We don't have to go back to a CR. Certainly, our side wants to avoid a Republican shutdown, and we hope our Republican colleagues will have the good sense not to let President Trump lead them into that cul-de-sac once again. So let's sit down and make this work. That is what we want to do, not unilaterally declare something and say, "Take it or leave it," but work together so both sides have to give.

BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now, on gun safety, in response to the scenes of senseless violence in America throughout the month of August, Leader MCCONNELL promised that the issue of gun safety would be "front and center" when Congress returned. The Democrats are eager to debate this issue, and we believe we have a great place to start—with the bipartisan, House-passed bill on universal background checks.

Leader MCCONNELL has also suggested that President Trump will determine if and what the Senate will vote on, so we need to know what the President might support. Throughout the month of August, frankly, the President was all over the map, saying he wanted strong background check legislation one day and then saying, the next day, we don't need it at all. It makes no sense. The President doesn't seem to know what he wants.

My Republican colleagues met with the President yesterday and ostensibly discussed the issue of gun safety. I asked them: Where is the President on this issue? Will he support universal background checks?

We are eager to move forward with this debate. We want to vote on the H.R. 8 bill—a simple bill of universal background checks. It does not impede on the rights of any legitimate gun owner. It only gets in the way of felons and spousal abusers and those adjudicated mentally ill from getting guns,

and no one thinks they should get them.

The President needs to make his position clear and soon. If he continues to refuse to state his position or if he keeps flipping around, the Senate should proceed to debate this on its own. In any case, you can be sure the Democrats will not let the issue of gun safety fall by the wayside.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Stephen Akard, of Indiana, to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

TORNADO IN SIOUX FALLS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as I begin this morning, I need to mention the tornado that tore through my hometown of Sioux Falls last night. Thankfully, there appear to have been no fatalities, but there has been a lot of structural damage. I am grateful to all of the emergency responders, the electric crews, and all of those who worked through the night to keep the residents safe. My thoughts are with Sioux Falls today and with all of those who are dealing with the tornado's aftermath.

I had the opportunity this morning to speak with Mayor Paul TenHaken, of Sioux Falls, who, as you would expect, was up throughout the night with his team. I just expressed our support to him, to his team, and to our community as they begin the process of the cleanup and recovery from what was a very damaging storm.

I also talked with my wife and older daughter, who lives in Sioux Falls, both of whom were in their basements last night as, I think, most residents were. I am glad to hear that people took the necessary steps to keep themselves and their families safe.

As I have reported, so far—knock on wood—we are not aware of injuries that have been associated with this. Yet I will continue to monitor the situation, and my staff and I are available to help with whatever will be needed as a result of this storm.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Mr. President, it is difficult to believe it has been 18 years since the September 11 attacks. That bright September morning is seared in our minds as if it were yesterday—the shock, the horror, the sense of unreality in the days that followed, the grief and loss but also the resolve and the unity of purpose.

As always, where there is great evil, good rises up in response—that of the courageous passengers on Flight 93 who laid down their lives to protect their fellow Americans; Vietnam veteran and Morgan Stanley security chief Rick Rescorla, who successfully evacuated more than 2,000 of his firm's employees from the World Trade Center and died returning to help evacuate others; Jason Thomas and Dave Karnes, two former marines who dropped everything and sped to the Towers and saved the lives of the two Port Authority officers they found who had been trapped in the rubble; National Guard pilots Heather Penney and Marc Sasseville, who scrambled their F-16s—weaponless—to meet the threat that was headed toward DC and who were prepared to sacrifice their lives by ramming their aircraft into Flight 93 before it could hit the Capitol or the White House; and the hundreds of first responders who ran toward the Towers, toward the inferno, and headed up the steps while civilians ran down.

Then there were the countless ordinary Americans who were far away from New York and Washington who flooded blood banks and overwhelmed organizations like the Red Cross with their donations; who stormed Heaven with prayers for the missing and the injured and the suffering; and who proudly flew their flags and reached out to their neighbors.

In the weeks and months and years to come, there was a 9/11 generation of soldiers—those who signed up in the wake of September 11 to fight back against the terrorists and those who were already serving. They deployed around the globe to fight terror and to defend freedom, and thousands of them laid down their lives. Eighteen years on, we remember the horror of that September day, but we are also lifted up by the memory of the heroes who came out of it.

For those of us who serve in Congress, the anniversary of September 11 is also a reminder of the obligation we have to provide for our Nation's defense and to ensure that we are prepared to meet and defeat any threat. In the Senate, I am proud that both parties have worked together over the past couple of years to rebuild our Nation's military after years of its being underfunded and the strains of the War on Terror.

September 11 is also a reminder of our obligation to care for those who stand between us and danger—our soldiers, our veterans, our first responders, and our law enforcement officers. They take on a heavy burden so the