for Congress to get its act together. They have to stay vigilant, remain in harm's way, and stay at their posts.

Our military commanders don't get to put critical overseas operations on pause until Washington does its job. Their objectives loom large whether or not we give them a predictable planning foundation.

Russia, China, and Iran will certainly not take a water break if uncertainty leaves our Nation flat-footed. They will keep growing their defense spending and seeking to expand their influence.

I had hoped our Democratic friends would be able to put impeachment aside long enough to at least fund the Department of Defense. We had heard public pronouncements from Speaker PELOSI and my colleague the Democratic leader that they intended to work with us on substantial legislation. If anything qualifies as substantial legislation, it is this. It meets the Pentagon's request for targeted investments in the U.S. military of the future. There are new resources for expanded missile defense capabilities, trauma training, fleet maintenance, and key partnerships with allies around the world.

But, alas, the Democratic leader announced at a press conference Tuesday that he plans to filibuster the annual funding for our Armed Forces. This would put our colleagues across the aisle in quite an unusual position. The same Democrats who have recently rediscovered hawkish-sounding positions on Syria and the Middle East are really going to filibuster $745 million for the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund, for Iraq and for Syria, and filibuster all the other broader funding of our Armed Forces? Really? The same Democrats whose latest effort to impeach the President hinges on delayed military assistance to Ukraine are themselves—themselves—going to filibuster funding for the exact same program, the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative? Really? It looks like it. The Democratic Party is too busy impeaching President Trump for supposedly slow-walking assistance for Ukraine to fund the exact same program themselves?

These are political gymnastics performed at an Olympic level—at an Olympic level. The core message here is hard to miss: Our Democratic colleagues have a priority list. Picking fights with the White House is priority No. 1. And our men and women in uniform fall somewhat further down.

It does not have to be this way. Even in a time as politically charged as an impeachment inquiry, it doesn't have to be this way. Back in 1998, just days before the Republican House began its impeachment inquiry into President Clinton, the House and the Senate passed a regular appropriations bill.

Then, some weeks later, even after the inquiry was underway, both Chambers were still able to pass more bills to address the fundamental business of funding the government, and President Clinton signed it into law during the impeachment.

So if Democrats follow through on their threat to filibuster the Defense funding later today, they will frankly be making even the 1998 impeachment period look like a clinic—a clinic—in bipartisan cooperation.

A Democratic filibuster of Defense funding is not the vote the military families and military installations in their home States deserve. It is not the vote our commanders deserve, and it is not the vote our national security deserves.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on a related matter, speaking of past precedent, I understand this morning House Democrats will finally cast their first impeachment vote on an impeachment resolution, which I understand they are afraid to actually call an impeachment resolution.

As I mentioned yesterday, Democrats' draft does not even come close to restoring the kinds of customary due process rights and protections that past impeachment inquiries included, either for President Trump or for their own Republican colleagues in the minority.

Here is what their resolution announced today. This is basically what it says: ''No due process now . . . but maybe some later . . . if we feel like it.'' It says: ''No due process now . . . but maybe some later . . . if we feel like it.'' This is not a fair way to treat any American, and it certainly is no way to conduct something as grave as an impeachment process, which seeks to overturn the American people's choice in a democratic election.

I hope the House of Representatives sees the light and steps away from their unfair and arbitrary process.

TURKEY AND SYRIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on another matter, many of us have been concerned for some time about the trajectory of our strategically important NATO ally Turkey under the leadership of President Erdogan.

Despite the hopes of the Obama administration and others that he would be a model of Islamic democracy, Erdogan has instead used democracy to work toward undemocratic ends. Freedom of the press, secularism, and human rights have suffered under his rule, while corruption has flourished. Opposition to Erdogan is growing, but the political space for Turks to express their opposition is shrinking.

Obviously, in recent days, our concerns have centered on Turkey's incursion into northeast Syria. We are angry about the damage Turkey has caused for our local Kurdish partners in Syria.

I have spoken at length about my concerns on Turkey's incursion and my opposition to withdrawing U.S. forces from Syria, but I believe we need to be guided by our strategic interests, not emotions, as we seek to contain the damage of Turkey's incursion, peel Ankara away from Moscow, and encourage better behavior at home and abroad by Erdogan's government.

I hope we will carefully consider all of our options to achieve these important objectives and carefully examine whether a broad mandatory sanctions bill is really the best solution.

We should think carefully about what specific effect we want sanctions to have, how Turkey will respond to them, and how Russia or others may exploit growing tensions between Washington and Ankara.

Before targeting an economy that is highly integrated with Europe's economy, we should seek a better understanding of the specific economic impact that broad sanctions will have on the global economy, on our European partners, and on American workers and job creators. We should reflect on whether we would be better off working in concert with European allies to shape Turkey's behavior versus abruptly forcing European companies to cut ties with Turkey through the threat of sanctions.

Before using these kinds of policy tools—the kinds we use against Iran and North Korea—against a democracy of 80 million people, we should consider the political impact that blunt sanctions will have on the Turkish people. Will sanctions rally them to our cause or to Erdogan's? Would more targeted sanctions perhaps avoid some of these unintended consequences? These are just some of the critical questions I hope our committees of jurisdiction and the administration are able to examine before we act.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on one final matter, I have spoken at length in recent weeks about the protests in Hong Kong and the situation in Syria. I would like to close today by recognizing other important developments in the Middle East that, regrettably, haven't received much attention.

Massive protests are underway in Lebanon and Iraq. Millions have taken to the streets to demand more responsive, more transparent, and less sectarian governance, and an end to rampant corruption. By all accounts, these protests are cross-sectarian, directed at an entire class of political leaders who have behaved undemocratically and unethically.

The protests are also directed at Iran. The Islamic Republic has long sought, through proxies like Hezbollah and Iraqi militias, to undermine the sovereignty of Lebanon and Iraq. Now even Shiite communities that have typically been heavily influenced by Iran are demanding politicians represent their interests instead of Tehran's interests.