

Johnny Isakson of Georgia, which was effective at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, December 31, 2019.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The distinguished leader is correct.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the letter be spread upon the Journal and printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The letter follows:

UNITED STATES SENATE,

Washington, DC, December 19, 2019.

Hon. BRIAN KEMP, Governor,
State of Georgia,
Atlanta, Georgia.

DEAR GOVERNOR KEMP: It has been the honor and privilege of a lifetime to serve the state of Georgia in the U.S. Senate since 2005. As you know, I have been battling health challenges for several years, and after much prayer and consultation with my family and doctors, I have decided I will leave the Senate before the end of my term.

I therefore am notifying you that I am resigning my U.S. Senate seat effective at 5 p.m. on December 31, 2019. While it pains me greatly to leave in the middle of my term, I know it is the right thing to do for the citizens of Georgia.

I pledge to you that my staff and I will do everything we can to help whomever you appoint to serve in this seat.

Thank you for your service to our great state.

Sincerely,

JOHNNY ISAKSON.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 6, 2020

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, January 6; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Carranza nomination; finally, that the cloture motion filed during today's session ripen at 5:30 p.m., Monday.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I just heard Leader McCONNELL speak for 30

minutes on the subject of the President's impeachment. There was a lot of finger-pointing, name-calling, and misreading of history but not a single argument or discussion about the issue that is holding up the Senate trial: whether there will be witnesses and documents—not one mention. He has no good argument against having witnesses and documents, so he resorts to these subterfuges.

I will have more to say on impeachment momentarily, but I first want to address the issue of Iran.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, the United States conducted a military operation designed to kill Major General Qasem Soleimani, a notorious terrorist. No one should shed a tear over his death. The operation against Soleimani in Iraq was conducted, however, without specific authorization and any advance notification or consultation with Congress.

I am a member of the Gang of 8, which is typically briefed in advance of operations of this level of significance. We were not. The need for advance consultation and transparency with Congress was put in the Constitution for a reason—because the lack of advance consultation and transparency with Congress can lead to hasty and ill-considered decisions. When the security of the Nation is at stake, decisions must not be made in a vacuum. The Framers of the Constitution gave war powers to the legislature and made the executive the Commander in Chief for the precise reason of forcing the two branches of government to consult with one another when it came to matters of war and peace.

It is paramount for an administration to get an outside view to prevent groupthink and rash action and to be asked probing questions, not from your inner and often insulated circle but from others—particularly Congress—which forces an administration, before it acts, to answer very serious questions. The administration did not consult in this case, and I fear that those very serious questions have not been answered and may not be fully considered.

Among those questions: What was the legal basis for conducting this operation? How far does that legal basis extend? Iran has many dangerous surrogates in the region and a whole range of possible responses. Which responses do we expect? Which are most likely? Do we have plans to counter all of the possible responses? How effective will our counters be? What does this action mean for the long-term stability of Iraq and the trillions of dollars and thousands of American lives sacrificed there? How does the administration plan to manage an escalation of hostilities? How does the administration plan to avoid larger and potentially endless conflagration in the Middle East? These are questions that must be answered.

It is my view that the President does not have the authority for a war with Iran. If he plans a large increase in troops and potential hostility over a longer time, the administration will require congressional approval and the approval of the American people.

The President's decision may add to an already dangerous and difficult situation in the Middle East. The risk of a much longer military engagement in the Middle East is acute and immediate. This action may well have brought our Nation closer to another endless war—exactly the kind of endless war the President promised he would not drag us into.

As our citizens and those of our allies evacuate Iraq and troops prepare for retaliatory action, Congress needs answers to these questions and others from the administration immediately, and the American people need answers as well.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the Senate begins this new session of Congress preparing to do something that has happened only twice before in American history: serving as a court of impeachment in a trial of the President of the United States.

President Donald Trump stands accused by the House of Representatives of committing one of the offenses the Founding Fathers most feared when it came to the stability of the Republic: abusing the powers of his office for personal gain and soliciting the interference of a foreign power in our elections to benefit himself. The House has also charged the President with obstructing Congress in the investigation into those matters, the consequence of an unprecedented blockade of relevant witnesses and documents—flatly denying the legislative branch's constitutional authority to provide oversight of the Executive.

As all eyes turn to the Senate, the question before us is, Will we fulfill our duty to conduct a fair impeachment trial of the President of the United States or will we not? That is the most pressing question facing the Senate at the outset of this second session of the 116th Congress. Will we conduct a fair trial that examines all the facts or not?

The country just saw Senator McCONNELL's answer to that question. His answer is no. Instead of trying to find the truth, he is still using the same feeble talking points he was using last December. The country just saw how the Republican leader views his responsibility at this pivotal moment in our Nation's history. The Republican leader prefers finger-pointing and name-calling to avoid answering the looming question: Why shouldn't the Senate call witnesses? The Republican leader hasn't given one good reason why there shouldn't be relevant witnesses or relevant documents. We did not hear one from Leader McCONNELL today or any day.