

said before, I hope all Senators will wait for the facts before they pass judgment on the recent strike on Soleimani. Patience, caution, and restraint can sometimes be in short supply around here, but when matters of national security are at hand, it is imperative that we seek out the facts, restrain our partisan urges, and concentrate on protecting our country.

For this reason, it has troubled me that Speaker PELOSI responded to the earliest reports yesterday by leaping to blame “needless provocations” by our administration. In other words, she was blaming the United States.

So let’s be clear. We can and should debate how to responsibly respond to Iranian threats, but the notion that our administration is to blame for Iranian aggression—that is nonsense. Utter nonsense.

For 40 years since the founding of the Islamic Republic, Iran has consistently pursued aggression against the United States, against Israel, and against its Arab neighbors. The question before us is not who is to blame for the aggression. It is how best to deter and defend against it.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I do need to say a few words about the other serious matter occupying the Congress.

Late last year, Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats sped through a slapdash impeachment of President Trump in 12 weeks because they insisted the need to undo the 2016 election was urgent—urgent, they said.

Since then, the same people have spent 3 weeks dragging their heels and refusing to proceed to a Senate trial. Supposedly, the explanation for this shameless game playing is that Speaker PELOSI wanted leverage—leverage—to reach into the Senate and dictate our trial proceedings to us.

I have made clear from the beginning that no such leverage exists. It is nonexistent. Yesterday, we made it clear it will never exist. A majority of the Senate has decided that the first phase of an impeachment trial should track closely with the unanimous bipartisan precedent that all 100 Senators supported for the first phase of the Clinton trial back in 1999. There will be no haggling with the House over Senate procedure. We will not cede our authority to try this impeachment. The House Democrats’ turn is over. The Senate has made its decision.

The 1999 precedent does not guarantee witnesses or foreclose witnesses. Let me say that again. It neither guarantees witnesses nor forecloses witnesses. It leaves those determinations until later in the trial, where they belong. I fully expect the parties will raise questions of witnesses at the appropriate time.

I would remind my friends on the other side that I strongly suspect that not all of the potential witnesses would be people the Democrats are eager to

hear from. The Senate will address all of these questions at the appropriate time, and that is for the Senate and the Senate only to decide, period.

Now even fellow Democrats are expressing public concern over the Speaker’s endless appetite for these cynical games. Here is what the senior Senator from Connecticut told the press yesterday. He said: “I think the time has passed. She should send the articles over.” And the senior Senator from West Virginia said: “I think it needs to start; I really do.” And the junior Senator from Maine said: “I think it is time for the Speaker to send the articles over.”

My Democratic friends are losing patience, just as the American people are losing patience. The country knows this absurdity should not go on. So what do the American people say?

A recent Harvard-Harris poll found that 58 percent of Americans believe Speaker PELOSI should send the articles to the Senate, not continue holding them up. Let me say that again. This is a Harvard poll. It found that 58 percent of Americans believe Speaker PELOSI should send the articles to the Senate, not continue holding them up. In the same survey, 77 percent believe Democrats need to accept the same structure as the Clinton trial rather than hold out for special new rules. So we are beginning to hear from the American people how they view this standoff.

We all know that Senators have a diversity of opinions about President Trump, about the House inquiry, and about the optimal structure for a trial. But notwithstanding all of this, no Senator—no Senator—should want the House of Representatives to steamroll institutional norms and dictate our business to us.

Haven’t enough toxic new precedents been set in recent months? Hasn’t the House broken enough constitutional china already?

This is not about the current Speaker and the current President. Do my colleagues believe this is what a future Democratic President would deserve? Do they believe it is good for the country?

There is a reason the Constitution reads the way it does. The House has the sole power of impeachment. They have exercised it. It is the Senate to whom the Founders gave the sole power to try all impeachments, end of story.

Yet, even as her fellow Democrats are jumping ship, the Speaker is trying to double down. Yesterday evening, in the midst of these deadly serious events, Speaker PELOSI put out yet another statement saying that she has no intention to end her political game playing. At the very same time that a global crisis was unfolding in realtime, she published yet another “Dear Colleague” letter saying that she intends to keep our Commander in Chief in this limbo indefinitely.

I am glad Democratic Senators are losing patience with this. I would urge

my friend the Democratic leader to listen to his own Members. My distinguished colleague from New York, as the minority leader in the U.S. Senate, is a senior Member of an independent branch of our bicameral legislature.

The Senate is not a creature of the House. The Democratic leader does not need to continue to be in thrall to the Speaker. He does not need to keep colluding with outside efforts to supplant the judgment of his own colleagues. Stand up for the Senate. Stand up for our institutions. Stand up for the country.

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 Matthew H. Solomson, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

IRAN

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, the Department of Defense confirmed reports that Iran launched missiles at a number of our installations in Iraq that housed U.S. and coalition forces. As details continue to emerge, it appears that there have been no casualties. We commend the professionalism and bravery of our servicemembers and other personnel in harm’s way.

While we are thankful that there were no casualties and we are thankful for the safety of American forces and personnel in the region, I condemn the attack by the Iranian Government and remain concerned about the risk of further escalation of hostilities in the Middle East. Now, more than ever, the

United States must be clear-headed and sure-footed about what comes next. The American people do not want a war with Iran, and the President does not have the authority to wage one.

Yesterday, we learned that the President had ordered the deployment of at least as many as 4,500 soldiers to the region—potentially more. Beyond Iraq, the U.S. military now has more than 70,000 troops in the Middle East, from Kuwait to Qatar, to Afghanistan, to the UAE, to Saudi Arabia, to Jordan, Oman, and Bahrain.

The President has promised to get the United States out of these forever wars in the Middle East, but the arrow is headed in the wrong direction.

Mr. President, how many more is it going to be? How long will they remain abroad? What is their objective? How will we assure their safety? Will more be deployed in the weeks and months ahead?

These are urgent questions. The administration must answer them. But so far, there has been a profound lack of information provided to Congress from the Department of Defense concerning what the Department is doing in response to Iran.

So I join Senators REED and DURBIN in requesting regular briefings and documents from the administration detailing the number of troops the President has deployed and plans to deploy in support of contingency plans with respect to Iran. We need to know if the administration is committing additional troops to the region and for how long.

Our letter urges the administration to clarify to the American people and our military that international law prohibits the deliberate targeting of cultural sites and that such an order would be unlawful and should not be followed.

The American people, rightfully, have serious concerns about a war with Iran and whether we are safer today because of this President's foreign policy, which is so often impulsive and erratic. I am afraid these impulsive and erratic actions throughout the world are making us less safe.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. President, now, on impeachment, yesterday, Leader MCCONNELL announced that he has the votes to pass a partisan resolution to set the rules for the impeachment trial of President Trump. It was another unfortunate confirmation that Leader MCCONNELL has no intention of working with the minority to establish rules of a fair and honest trial that examines the evidence, hears from witnesses, and receives the relevant documents.

I have asked Leader MCCONNELL repeatedly to sit down and negotiate a plan where we would have witnesses and documents, and he has refused. Instead, Leader MCCONNELL, by his own admission, took his cues from the White House when it came to setting the parameters of a trial. Rather than engaging in any serious negotiation

with the Senate minority, he only spent time trying to convince his caucus that we should punt the questions of witnesses and documents to a later date.

I have explained why this proposal makes very little sense from the perspective of having a fair trial. The evidence should inform arguments in a trial. Evidence should not be an afterthought. Why would it make sense for both sides to present their entire case and then decide whether the Senate should request the evidence that we already know is out there?

It is extremely telling that Leader MCCONNELL and Senate Republicans are not willing to take a forthright position on whether we should call witnesses and request documents. They can only say that the issue should be addressed later. Their only refuge—not much of one—is to kick the can down the road. No one—no one—has advanced an argument as to why the four eyewitnesses we have proposed should not testify. No one has advanced an argument as to why the three specific sets of documents related to the charges against the President should not be provided. Republicans can only get behind kicking the can down the road because they know we have the full weight of the argument on our side. There is virtually no argument why we shouldn't have witnesses and why we shouldn't have documents.

I want to make one thing very clear: There will be votes—repeated votes—on the question of witnesses and documents at the trial. The initial votes will not be the last votes on the matter. Republicans can delay it, but they cannot avoid it. And when those votes come up, Senate Republicans—not Leader MCCONNELL, who has already cast his lot completely with the defendant, the President—will have two crucial things to worry about.

First, if the Senate runs a sham trial without witnesses, without documents, and without all of facts, then the President's acquittal at the end of the trial will be meaningless. A trial without all the facts is a farce. The verdicts of kangaroo courts are empty.

Leader MCCONNELL is fond of claiming that the House ran the "most rushed, least thorough, and most unfair impeachment inquiry in modern history." I know that is his talking point, but, in truth, Leader MCCONNELL is plotting to run the most rushed, least thorough, and most unfair impeachment trial in modern history. If the Senate rushes through the President's impeachment, if we actually fail to try the case, as the Constitution demands, then the true acquittal the President craves will be unobtainable.

The American people will see right through a partisan trial and understand that a rush to judgment renders that moot. They will understand that, when you don't want witnesses and documents, you are afraid of the truth and that you are covering something up, and that the likelihood is strong

that you did something very wrong. That is common sense. That is what all the polling data shows most Americans believe.

Second, when the Senate has votes on witnesses and documents, my Republican colleagues will have to answer to not just the President. The American people do not want a coverup. Whatever their view of the President, the American people want the Senate to have a fair trial. All the data shows that, with two more polls in the last few days. Every Senator will be under massive public pressure to support a fair trial that examines all the facts.

The American people understand the gravity of the charges against the President. The House has impeached the President for using the powers of his public office to benefit himself. The President was impeached because the House believes he tried to shake down a foreign leader into investigating his political opponent, pressuring a foreign power to interfere in our elections. He was impeached because he undertook an unprecedented campaign of obstruction to prevent Congress from investigating his wrongdoing.

The Articles of Impeachment suggest the President committed a grave injury to our democracy. The conduct they describe is exactly what the Founders most feared when they forged the impeachment powers of Congress.

If the Senate fails to hold a fair hearing of those charges, if one party—the President's party—decides to rush through a trial without hearing all the facts, witnesses, and documents, it will not just be the verdict of history that falls heavy on their shoulders. The American people, in the here and now, will pass a harsh judgment on Senators who participate in a coverup for the President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

IRAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last night Iran fired more than a dozen ballistic missiles at two military bases in Iraq where American troops were based. It was a brazen escalation with dangerous implications for the United States and the world.

We are fortunate. As of today, at this moment, none of our personnel have been reported to have been harmed, but the outrageous act was a clear and unsurprising retaliation to President Trump's killing of Iranian General Soleimani.

Our first order of business must be the safety of our military and civilian personnel in Iraq and the region, and I call on the Trump administration to make that the highest priority. Another immediate requirement is that the Congress step up and play one of the most important and long-neglected constitutional roles that we can envision. Article I, section 8, of the U.S. Constitution is clear in stating that the power to declare war is an explicit authority and power of Congress, as it

should be. One should never send our sons and daughters into conflict without the knowledge and consent of the American people. Our Founding Fathers were wise in making sure that this awesome power did not rest with a King-like leader but with the people's elected representatives. I have made this same argument regardless of whether the occupant of the White House was a Democrat or a Republican.

Some have had the audacity to argue that the 2001 authorization for the use of military force approved by this Congress to respond to the September 11, 2001, attacks or the 2002 AUMF, the war with Iraq, apply to the situation today in Iran. That is clearly wrong.

Let me be clear. I cannot imagine that anyone—anyone—who took either of those votes nearly 20 years ago—and I was here at that time—thought that they were approving a war with Iran two decades later. I certainly didn't.

This Congress should not be a troubling rubberstamp for President Trump's worst instincts by marching into another war in the Middle East. Simply, it is time for Members of this important body to show some courage and do their constitutional jobs. If you want a war with Iran, step up and face your constituents and record your vote accordingly.

The War Powers Resolution I filed last week, with the leadership of Senator TIM KAINE of Virginia, will be a first step regarding Congress's role in any conflict with Iran but not a last step. Ultimately, this President cannot start a war with Iran without the approval, under the Constitution, of Congress, and the Republican leadership should not roll over and play the role of lapdog when it comes to such a serious, life-and-death matter.

Tragically, this escalation with Iran—and the heightened risk to our personnel and security interests—was entirely predictable, except, it appears, to President Trump and Secretary Pompeo. The question was never the simplistic canard over whether killing Soleimani, a genuinely loathsome terrorist actor, was warranted or not, but, clearly, whether taking him off the face of the Earth was in the best interest of the United States.

Would such an act really advance the cause and interest and policies of our country or precipitate another war in the Middle East? The answer is increasingly upon us, and we here must debate this crisis before President Trump drags us even closer to this precipice.

Mr. President, sadly, President Trump's erratic and incoherent policies toward Iran have greatly contributed to the current crisis.

Before taking office, Iran's nuclear weapons program was halted in a historic agreement President Obama negotiated in cooperation with our European allies, China, and Russia.

Iran continued its malign behaviors in the region, but containing them was much easier without the threat of a nuclear bomb.

President Trump petulantly withdrew from the nuclear agreement and tried to starve Iran of benefits it was to receive from that deal.

He pursued an incomprehensible erratic policy of regime change by trying to flatter and meet with Iranian President Rouhani to negotiate a supposedly better deal . . . threatening Iran militarily . . . and tightening sanctions.

Those efforts were going nowhere. Iran was lashing out at American interests, we were alienated from our key allies, and Iran inched closer to re-starting its nuclear program.

And in just the last week alone, President Trump's impulsive actions managed to reverse the recent Iraqi protest sentiment that wanted Iran to stop meddling in its politics, leading instead to a vote this weekend in the Iraqi parliament to expel all U.S. forces.

Similarly, after months of anti-government protests in Iran, he almost instantaneously united Iranian public opinion in hostility toward the U.S.

Iran now announced it is restarting its nuclear program and our interests around the region are on high alert and are at risk from further Iranian attack for considerable time to come.

Tragically, all President Trump has to show for his foolish, quote, "maximum pressure" campaign is an enflamed region, attacks on our personnel, the U.S. military potentially being evicted from Iraq, greater U.S. troop deployments to the Middle East, and an America less safe and on the brink of war.

Most certainly not "all is well."

Have we learned nothing from the thousands of lost lives and injuries and trillions of dollars spent on the war in Iraq—a war sold to this country on false pretenses?

Are we going to be led to yet such another fiasco by some of the same voices around President Trump who have yet to account for their failures in their disastrous war in Iraq?

Will my Republican colleagues finally show some backbone to an unchecked, uninformed, and untrusted President about to bumble into another war in the Middle East?

For the sakes of the sons and daughters who would be sent to any war with Iran, I certainly hope so.

I see that my colleague from Illinois is here and has asked for permission to speak on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL GEORGE DESOMBRE

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I am here to speak on two matters.

The first is the nomination for Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand of Michael DeSombre. The Kingdom of Thailand has been a longtime U.S. ally and is a key partner for our efforts in the Southeast Asia region, both economically and militarily.

Unfortunately, this nominee has failed to reach out to either me or my

colleague and my senior Senator, DICK DURBIN, both of whom are his home-State Senators. He has not reached out to me. So I am asking my colleagues to please vote no on cloture on Michael DeSombre to be our Ambassador to the Kingdom of Thailand until such time as I am able to have a chance to sit down with him.

IRAN

Mr. President, now I would like to speak on the attacks from Iran.

"All is well." That is what Donald Trump said just hours after a dozen missiles were fired at two U.S. military bases last night. That is what he said as thousands of troops are readying to deploy to the Middle East, to a hotbed of anger, where wearing an American flag on your shoulder gets more dangerous by the day. That is what he said as his own Nation careens toward a reckless and unauthorized war of his own making, born out of his illiteracy in matters ranging from foreign policy to common sense.

Donald Trump never deigned to put on the uniform of this great Nation, using his father's money to buy his way out of military service when his country needed him in Vietnam.

Let me make something clear to Donald Trump. All is certainly not well when war is on the horizon, just because you want to look like the toughest kid on the playground. I am incredibly thankful that no Americans were killed last night in Iran's rebuttal attack, but some missed missiles should be no cause for celebration for the President. Just because there weren't fatalities yesterday doesn't mean there will not be any tragedies tomorrow.

We got into this situation because of Trump's glibness, because he liked the feeling of thumping his chest and the roar it got from FOX News, because he was so enamored by maximum pressure that he laughed at the idea of even minimum diplomacy. Now America is less safe as a result. So, no, Mr. President, all is certainly not well.

Sadly, Trump's glibness is shocking but not surprising. Last weekend, he was at his golf course in Florida, while more and more American troops were packing their rucks and getting ready to deploy 7,000 miles east. He was tweeting from Mar-a-Lago while the Iraqi Parliament was voting to expel U.S. servicemembers from their nation. He was rubbing shoulders with fellow millionaires from the comfort of his ritzy country club while the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS was announcing that we no longer have the resources to fight ISIS in Iraq and that, instead, we have to hunker down and focus on protecting our troops from the acts of revenge that Iran has promised are on the way.

A potential global conflict is veering closer by the hour, and it is because of Donald Trump. It is because of his impetuosity and his ignorance. It is because, once again, he has been manipulated by a hostile regime into decisions that further their goals while endangering the security of the Nation

Trump is actually supposed to be leading.

When I deployed to Iraq in 2004, I saw firsthand just how eager the country was to shake off Iran's influence. I watched as the anti-Iran protests continued long after I flew my last mission, as young Iraqis spoke out against Iran while I was back in Baghdad just this past spring, as protests roiled as recently as last month, when tens of thousands of Iraqis flooded the streets, raising voices and picket signs, demanding that their government crawl out from under Tehran's thumb.

Now, after Donald Trump decided to kill Major General Qasem Soleimani on sovereign Baghdad soil, those same streets are now filled with protesters once more. Yet, this time, they are marching in solidarity with the enemy that hundreds of Iraqis died marching against just a few short weeks ago.

With one choice, Donald Trump squandered the opportunity that existed to push against Iranian influence and for greater democracy and stability in the Middle East. In one fell swoop, he somehow managed to villainize the United States and victimize Iran, our enemy, isolating us from a long-term partner in Iraq and amping up Iran's influence in a country that everyone knows is vital to our security interests throughout the Middle East.

Look, Iran didn't want Trump to kill Soleimani, but they were hungry for all that has happened as a result. They were starving to go on the offensive, desperate to change the narrative, to swing public opinion and solidify their power in Iraq, to have a new excuse to attack anyone with an American flag on their shoulder and to shrug off the restraints of the nuclear deal.

Like a pawn in a game of chess he didn't even seem to know he was playing, Trump was baited into handing them all of that. Like a child who is blind to consequences, ignorant of his own ignorance, he has given Iran everything they could have asked for in the end, making it far more likely that tomorrow—or next week or next month—more Americans will be sent into another one of the forever wars he has bragged that he, and he alone, would be able to end.

We used to have the Monroe Doctrine and the Truman doctrine. Now we have the Trump doctrine, in which the leader of the free world, the Commander in Chief of the greatest fighting force ever assembled, gets manipulated again and again by dictators of hostile regimes. We have already seen it too many times since he was sworn into office. We have seen it played out on the streets of Venezuela and the deserts of northeast Syria. We have seen him get manipulated by tyrants in Pyongyang and Riyadh, subjugated by despots in Moscow and Ankara, as our allies laughed—literally laughed—at him behind his back.

All these dictators and hostile regimes know. They have realized the

same thing: The President of the United States is as easy to control as a toddler. Sweet-talk him or thump your chest and issue a few schoolyard threats and you have got him. He will fall for it every time, doing your bidding as if it is his own. I wish this weren't true, but my diaper-wearing, 20-month-old daughter has better impulse control than this President. Kids in school cafeterias know not to look up when someone tells them that "gullible" is written on the ceiling, but I am pretty sure Donald Trump, a man who once stared directly into a solar eclipse, will be caught stealing a glance, just to be sure.

The thing is, Trump told us who he was long before he stepped into the Oval Office, and too many chose not to believe him. As a so-called businessman, he left a string of bankruptcies wherever he went, destroying both his own companies and the small businesses unlucky enough to be caught in his wake.

Now, though, as Commander in Chief, his incompetence has cost us our standing in the world, endangered our national security, and placed an even bigger target on our deployed troops. Now, the currency that he is spending isn't just the money that his father left him but the blood of the men and women who have sworn an oath to defend this Nation to their deaths.

Sixteen years ago, I was one of the many Americans deployed to Iraq, one of the many who was willing to sacrifice everything, after our Commander in Chief convinced Congress that our Nation's security depended on removing Saddam Hussein and replacing his regime with a democracy. A decade and a half later, we have spent trillions of dollars to achieve that goal. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi citizens have been killed or displaced. Thousands of our bravest have died for that goal. Thousands more have been wounded and maimed.

We did not sacrifice all of that for this President to turn our Iraqi partners into adversaries who vote to kick us out of the very democracy we helped to build.

I have friends who have done 8, 9, 10 tours in Iraq, who go each time knowing they will probably be back on that same stretch of sand in a couple of years, who proudly answer the call and who will continue to answer the call, fighting for that same patch of desert over and over again because they believe—they believe—us when we tell them that will make America safer and more secure. They gain a few feet one tour, lose an inch or two the next, watching their buddies lose limbs or lives over that same piece of ground time and again.

Those troops show up ready to do their jobs whenever we ask, no matter what. We need to honor that. We need to honor their willingness to show up and carry out the mission. Now, especially after the attacks last night, we in Congress can honor them by doing

our job. We are the branch vested with that most solemn duty of declaring war, so we need to exert our constitutional control over this out-of-control toddler-in-chief and vote to prevent him from entangling us in another major war without legal authorization from Congress. In this moment, at this precipice, we need to be doing whatever we can to break the cycle of escalation. We need less chest-thumping and more diplomacy.

Don't get me wrong—I am glad this general is dead. He was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American servicemembers over the last decades. I also want to stop Iranian influence, but this decision by this President has not done that.

If we truly want to honor our heroes in uniform, we wouldn't send them into harm's way without a clear-eyed discussion of the mission we are asking them to carry out and the consequences for both them and our Nation. Then, after we have that discussion, if we still believe war is the right path, I will vote yes. But so far, Trump has not even managed to come to us to give us his reasons for his actions. Having never sacrificed much himself, he doesn't understand our troops' sacrifices. Having never really served anything other than his own self-interests, he doesn't give a second thought to their service, treating their dedication to our Nation with the kind of reckless abandon he did the cash he blew through with each of his bankruptcies.

I don't need to remind anyone that Donald Trump is a five-deferment draft dodger. But his ignorance about military service isn't captured just by the privilege he showed when he dodged service in Vietnam—no, it is also revealed in his brazen embrace of torture, his hostility toward good order and discipline, and his stated desire to commit war crimes.

I implore my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to recognize our Commander in Chief for who he really is. Donald Trump will never willingly cut the puppet strings that the likes of Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un are using to make him dance. We need a strong majority in the Senate to force such an action, to discuss the AUMF. Until then, small-time dictators will continue to have access to the world's most powerful marionette, and we will all suffer the consequences.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, let me say that I, along with I think most Americans, am grateful that in the rocket attacks launched last night by Iran, there were no American casualties. I think I, like most of our colleagues here in the Senate, I hope, will have an opportunity later today to hear from the administration about the state of events there and what the plans are going forward.

We all know it is a dangerous part of the world. It has been that way for decades. The Iranian influence there is a

malign influence that has put at risk and in jeopardy not only American lives but lives of countless people throughout that region.

Mr. Soleimani, who was removed in the last few days, of course, was responsible for hundreds of American deaths. His loss is something that I think people not only in this country but certainly people in that region of the world benefit from because he will no longer be able to conduct and operate and commit terrorist attacks and bring about death to people all over that region of the world.

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. President, I would also like to point out, as I think most know, and most of the reporting has reflected this, that Republicans in the Senate—and yesterday Leader MCCONNELL made the statement—are prepared to take up the Articles of Impeachment when they are delivered to us by the House of Representatives. For whatever reason—and it appears that the House Democrats under Speaker PELOSI have determined that it is to their political advantage for some reason to hang on to those articles and to perhaps game this out a little bit. We, of course, don't know what that gains them. But in any event, they have not yet, after now several weeks, decided to proceed and to bring those over here to the Senate.

I would point out that it can't be because there isn't a process in place to deal with those articles when they arrive. Obviously, what Republicans in the Senate have agreed to adopt is the Clinton precedent—in other words, the precedent that was used when President Clinton went through impeachment 21 years ago. At that time, it was good enough for all of the Democrats in the U.S. Senate—by a vote of 100 to 0, a unanimous vote in the U.S. Senate—to proceed to those articles.

All Senate Republicans are simply saying is that is a good precedent. It was good enough for Democrats and Republicans back then, and it ought to be good enough for Republicans and Democrats today.

What that simply provides for is to allow both sides—the managers in the House to come over and make their argument; the President and his team to be able to put up their defense; Senators to have an opportunity to listen to those arguments and then to propound questions, to ask questions through the Chair that could be responded to, and then, at that time, to determine whether additional information, evidence, witnesses, et cetera, could be brought forward. But as a very straightforward process—one, as I said, that met with the approval of all 100 Senators, both Democrats and Republicans, back in 1999—the Clinton precedent seems to me, at least, to be a fair way in which to proceed and one that Senate Republicans have agreed to move forward with.

If and when the House Democrats under Speaker PELOSI determine they

are ready to send those articles over here—it seems like maybe they are waiting for something to rescue what I think is an otherwise fairly weak argument they have to make, but when those articles arrive here, we will have a process in place in which to move forward and get this trial underway in the Senate and hopefully hear the arguments and at some point—I hope in the not too distant future—conclude this and get it behind us and move on to the work the American people sent us here to do.

Obviously, there is an election coming up in November. The first votes will start being cast just a few weeks from now in the States of Iowa, New Hampshire, and other States, followed very closely on by Super Tuesday. The election process is already underway, and I think that is the means by which most Americans believe we ought to deal with our leadership. In a democratic system of government, we have the opportunity as people to express our opinions and to voice our views in that manner. I hope that is where we can settle these political differences and disputes we have.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. President, while the House continues to be bogged down and stalled out over impeachment, the Senate is moving forward with the business that I think is important to the daily lives of the American people.

Yesterday, the Senate Finance Committee passed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement out of our committee. I serve as a member of that committee. I was pleased to vote to move this agreement one step closer to final approval by the full Senate.

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement will benefit almost every sector of our economy, from manufacturing, to digital services, to the automotive industry. It will create hundreds of thousands of new jobs, boost our economic output, and increase wages for workers.

The agreement breaks new ground by including a chapter specifically focused on small and medium-sized businesses. This is the first time a U.S. trade agreement has ever included a dedicated chapter on this topic. Roughly 120,000 small and medium-sized businesses around our country export goods and services to Mexico and Canada, including a number of businesses in my home State of South Dakota. USMCA will make it easier for these businesses to successfully export their product.

South Dakota businesses and consumers will also benefit from the fact that the agreement maintains the current U.S. de minimis threshold—something I fought hard to protect.

I am also particularly excited about the benefits the USMCA will bring to farmers and ranchers. Farmers and ranchers have had a tough time over the past few years. Low commodity and livestock prices, natural disasters, and protracted trade disputes have left

farmers and ranchers in my home State of South Dakota and around the country struggling.

I spend a lot of time at home talking to farmers and ranchers. Again and again, they have emphasized to me that the most important thing Washington can do to boost our Nation's farm economy is to conclude favorable trade deals. That is why I have spent a lot of time this past year pushing for adoption of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement and why I am so pleased that after a long year waiting for the House under Speaker PELOSI to take it up and act on it, we are finally going to have the opportunity to approve that trade deal in the Senate.

Canada and Mexico are the No. 1 and No. 2 markets for American agricultural products. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement will preserve and expand farmers' access to these two critical export markets, and it will give farmers certainty about what these markets will look like long term.

I am particularly excited about the improvements the agreement makes for dairy farmers. If you drive the I-29 corridor north of Brookings, SD, you will see firsthand the major dairy expansion South Dakota has experienced over the past several decades—I should say, over the past several years.

The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement will preserve U.S. dairy farmers' role as a key dairy supplier to Mexico, and it will substantially expand market access in Canada. In fact, the U.S. International Trade Commission estimates that the agreement will boost U.S. dairy exports by more than \$277 million. The agreement will also expand market access for U.S. poultry and egg producers. It will make it easier for U.S. producers to export wheat to Canada.

There is so much more in this agreement.

Yesterday's Finance Committee vote was a long time coming for South Dakota farmers and ranchers. Months of delay by House Democrats left agriculture producers wondering if they would ever see the benefits of this agreement. But we have at last been able to move forward, and I look forward to full Senate passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada trade agreement in the very near future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant 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 Matthew H. Solomson, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Matthew H. Solomson, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 88, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 3 Ex.]

YEAS—88

Baldwin	Fischer	Portman
Barrasso	Gardner	Reed
Bennet	Graham	Risch
Blackburn	Grassley	Roberts
Blumenthal	Hassan	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rosen
Boozman	Heinrich	Rounds
Braun	Hoeven	Rubio
Brown	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Schatz
Cantwell	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Capito	Jones	Scott (SC)
Cardin	Kaine	Shaheen
Carper	Kennedy	Shelby
Casey	King	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Sullivan
Cornyn	Loeffler	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Thune
Cotton	McConnell	Tillis
Cramer	McSally	Toomey
Crapo	Menendez	Udall
Cruz	Merkley	Van Hollen
Daines	Moran	Warner
Duckworth	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wicker
Enzi	Murray	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Feinstein	Peters	

NAYS—7

Gillibrand	Klobuchar	Wyden
Harris	Markey	
Hirono	Schumer	

NOT VOTING—5

Alexander	Perdue	Warren
Booker	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 88, the nays are 7. The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant bill 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 Eleni Maria Roumel, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Mike Crapo, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Lamar Alexander, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, John Thune, Cindy Hyde-Smith, John Boozman, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Kevin Cramer, Steve Daines, Todd Young, John Cornyn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Eleni Maria Roumel, of Maryland, to be a Judge of United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote or change their vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Ex.]

YEAS—51

Barrasso	Crapo	Inhofe
Blackburn	Cruz	Johnson
Blunt	Daines	Kennedy
Boozman	Enzi	Lankford
Braun	Ernst	Lee
Burr	Fischer	Loeffler
Capito	Gardner	McConnell
Cassidy	Graham	McSally
Collins	Grassley	Moran
Cornyn	Hawley	Murkowski
Cotton	Hoeven	Paul
Cramer	Hyde-Smith	Portman

Risch	Sasse	Thune
Roberts	Scott (FL)	Tillis
Romney	Scott (SC)	Toomey
Rounds	Shelby	Wicker
Rubio	Sullivan	Young

NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Reed
Bennet	Heinrich	Rosen
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Brown	Jones	Schumer
Cantwell	Kaine	Shaheen
Cardin	King	Sinema
Carper	Klobuchar	Smith
Casey	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Duckworth	Menendez	Van Hollen
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Harris	Peters	

NOT VOTING—5

Alexander	Perdue	Warren
Booker	Sanders	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 44. The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant 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 Michael George DeSombre, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

Mitch McConnell, John Boozman, James M. Inhofe, John Barrasso, Roy Blunt, Todd Young, Shelley Moore Capito, Michael B. Enzi, Lisa Murkowski, John Cornyn, Steve Daines, Lindsey Graham, Chuck Grassley, Josh Hawley, Roger F. Wicker, Marsha Blackburn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Michael George DeSombre, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.