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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal spirit, grant to this Nation and to all people a social conscience built on the vision of the ancient prophets who saw sufficiency for every person and a time when anxiety would overcome chaos and hopelessness. Hasten the day when the small and weak can make their contributions alongside the great and powerful. Lead us to the day when we will see peace among the Nations of the Earth, when swords shall be beaten into plowshares. Use the Members of this body to bring us to the time when Your will is done on Earth, even as it is done in Heaven.

Lord, we trust You with our future. Let Your glory cover the Earth as the waters cover the sea.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask permission to speak for 1 minute in morning business.

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

SREBRENICA

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, there is an area in Bosnia that goes by the name of Srebrenica. This month is the 25th anniversary of a massacre that

took place there. It happens to be the worst genocide on European soil since the Holocaust.

Twenty-five years ago, 8,000 Bosnians were murdered out of ethnic and religious hatred. Many Bosnians, who witnessed this horrific atrocity, became refugees and found a home in my State of Iowa. We must remember for those Bosnians, Iowans, and for all Bosnians who suffer as they continue to deal with unimaginable memories. It is also important for the rest of us to make a point of remembering what has happened so we can prevent it from happening again.

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. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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 MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this week, the Senate will pass the 60th annual National Defense Authorization Act. Every year, this legislation lets the Senate make our top priorities for protecting our homeland, our allies, and our global interests into law, and, certainly, the recent behavior of our adversaries world over shows why this task is as urgent as ever.

Even as our Nation is focused on fighting the pandemic at home, our servicemembers have contended with dangerous behavior from would-be competitors all around the world. The

Russian military has kept probing the bounds of U.S. airspace, and Putin's regime has kept its sights on cyber war and destabilization by proxy.

China continues to treat international commercial lanes like its own private pond, choke freedom and autonomy out of Hong Kong, and try to ethnically cleanse Xinjiang.

Both countries continue to modernize their military capabilities from sea to space. And Iranian meddling, North Korean saber-rattling, and the persistent violence of terrorist groups like ISIS and al-Qaida demand our attention as well.

Amid these threats and many others, the American people and the entire free world look to the men and women of the U.S. military to preserve order and peace. The open and bipartisan process led by Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED has produced strong legislation that will advance their missions.

It is the product of intense committee work; it contains more than 200 bipartisan amendments; and it builds on the historic progress which this administration and this Republican Senate have secured over the past 3 years.

After years of cuts to our military that weakened readiness, imperiled modernization, and called into question our commitment to preserving our global interests, we have reversed the tide. We have invested in strength. We built a new national defense strategy and are investing in rebuilding and modernizing our military to help achieve it.

This legislation will carry the progress even further—more support for defense research and innovation, resources for military housing and healthcare, tools to deepen our commitments with regional partners in Europe and the Pacific.

For most Americans, investing in the greatest fighting force in the world is not controversial. It is a no-brainer. But lest we forget, the radical energy

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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on the far left is sparking some truly extraordinary behavior among our Democratic colleagues.

Case in point, later today, we will vote on an amendment that was advertised in an opinion essay by the junior Senator from Vermont titled “Defund the Pentagon: The Liberal Case.” This is the junior Senator from Vermont—an essay titled “Defund the Pentagon: The Liberal Case.”

You heard correctly. We have moved on from defunding local police to defunding the U.S. Armed Forces. Maybe we will be sending social workers on overseas deployments, when they aren’t too busy responding to violent crimes. I am not sure. Senator SANDERS’ amendment would literally decimate the defense budget. It would rip 10 percent of it right out and pour the money into all the socialist fantasies—free rent, free college, free everything for everyone.

Now, in light of the long-held views of our colleague from Vermont, a proposal like this may not be particularly shocking. What is remarkable is that the Democratic leader—the leader of their caucus—felt pressured into endorsing it.

Let me say that again: The Democratic leader, who in almost every floor speech tries to accuse this administration of being too soft on America’s adversaries, wants to literally decimate our defense budget to finance a socialist spending spree.

This turns out to be something of a pattern. On the Democratic side, it sometimes seems like we have hawks when it comes to speeches but chickens when it comes time to make policy. When they are on the sidelines, there is plenty of bark, but whenever they actually call a shot, there is zero bite. Lots of bark, little bite; all hat, no cattle.

That is how we end up with spectacles like the Democratic leader playing as a Russian hawk, when about a decade ago, he was publicly arguing we should cozy up to Putin, send Russia billions of dollars of cash, pull the plug on NATO missile defense pacts that hurt Putin’s feelings, and concede to him, “Russia’s traditional role” in the Caspian Sea region.

That was the Democratic leader in 2008. Pay off Putin, and let him have his sphere of influence. And now today, he wants to decimate defense spending. But in between, he spent years insisting that Democrats want to get tough—want to get tough on foreign policy.

You see how the game works: sound like hawks on television, act like chickens when making policy.

Defense spending demonstrates our will to defend ourselves and our interests in a dangerous world. Keeping our Nation safe is our foremost constitutional duty. We cannot shirk it.

My colleagues who profess concern over Putin’s efforts to interfere in our politics, or Xi’s efforts to rewrite the rules of the international system, must

know that we will never—never be able to deter such behavior if we sell our own soldiers short and surrender our technological edge.

I assure you, Beijing and Moscow will be watching this vote. I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to reject this far-left fantasy. Defeat this amendment. Throughout the Cold War, we maintained a bipartisan commitment to American strength, American alliances, and a global peace built on American values. We will reinforce that stand when we sink—sink the reckless Sanders-Schumer amendment and again when we pass this bipartisan bill.

FREE SPEECH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on a final matter, since the spring, our Nation has engaged in important conversations about racial justice in policing.

Most people understand that continuing our Nation’s tremendous progress toward justice does not mean battling against American principles or American history. Progress means fulfilling our values, not attacking them.

Yet a group of radicals have latched onto this moment to say we should repudiate our country itself. We have watched as mobs have dragged statues of Washington, Jefferson, and Grant through the dirt. And, in parallel, inside many elite institutions, self-styled intellectuals say we should similarly discard the basic principles they fought for.

One of the key pillars of our Nation is the rule of law. In a civilized society, the same laws need to apply to everyone. The times our Nation has fallen short on this score, particularly for all the years when Black Americans were completely denied the equal protections of law, it has been to our great shame. This has been central to the cause of civil rights. There is a reason the 14th amendment insists on “the equal protection of the laws.”

Yet, in recent months, local leaders have violated this basic tenet. As riots rocked major cities, we saw politicians decline to act. They seem to fear far-left critique more than looting and chaos. And we saw the uneven application of other rules, like when mayors cheered on mass demonstrations but continued to prohibit religious gatherings. That is the rule of law in jeopardy. Of course, the last example is also a First Amendment issue. And the freedom of expression itself is another principle that has come under threat.

As I said a few weeks back, this goes deeper than just constitutional law. America has always prized the spirit of the First Amendment. We citizens must want to protect an open, civil discourse—a true marketplace of ideas. But, lately, the political left has embraced something totally different.

Today’s far left is not interested in winning debates with better arguments. They prefer to shut down de-

bate all together. They don’t try to win the contest. They just harangue the referees to stop the game. If they don’t like an op-ed, they want it unpublished. If they don’t like a tweet, they want to track down the author and get them fired. If they don’t like a tenured professor, they throw around Orwellian accusations that his or her ideas make them feel unsafe.

This hostile culture is getting results. According to one brand-new survey, it is only the far-left Americans who do not feel compelled to self-censor their views because of a hostile climate. Everyone but the left feels the threat.

And 50 percent of self-identified strong liberals say that simply contributing to the Republican Presidential candidate ought to be a fireable offense for a business leader. Let me say that again. Fifty percent of self-identified strong liberals say that simply contributing to the Republican Presidential candidate ought to be a fireable offense for a business leader. In this country?

We recently saw the New York Times apologize for publishing a straightforward policy argument from a U.S. Senator. Since, an editorial staffer resigned from the paper because even center-left opinions were not liberal enough and led to her constant harassment. That was a recent editorial staffer resigning from the New York Times because her center-left opinions were not liberal enough and led to her constant harassment at the times. You see, the safe spaces only go in one direction.

On elite campuses such as Princeton, we see faculty turning on their tenured colleagues and even administrators weighing in to chastise people with unpopular views.

We see online platforms such as Facebook threatening to ban political advertising altogether, chilling our democracy, because far-left employees and outside pressure groups berate them for letting the very speakers use their platform.

Even at a time when there is significant appetite in Congress to take a second look at the legal protections afforded to those supposedly neutral platforms, they still contemplate giving an angry minority of agitators a veto over Americans’ political speech.

The author Salman Rushdie, who was himself threatened with death for controversial speech, once said this:

Two things form the bedrock of any open society—freedom of expression and rule of law. If you don’t have those things, you don’t have a free country.

Free expression and the rule of law—exactly the two things we have seen eroded in recent months.

Rushdie recently signed an open letter with other intellectuals—many liberals—sounding the alarm on this cultural poison. “Editors are fired,” they wrote, “books are withdrawn . . . journalists are barred from writing on certain topics . . . professors are investigated . . . steadily narrow[ing] the