

interview, and in my judgment, he did not address and did not respond appropriately to those reports.

I was hoping what the President would say in the interview that I saw on television this morning—I guess it was yesterday—and what he would have said long before that is that we are going to investigate this and we are going to make a determination about the conclusion that we reach—that he would reach as President and that he would directly confront Vladimir Putin and challenge him on this. But he had a recent phone call with him, and all the reporting indicates and even the President indicated in his interview that he did not challenge Vladimir Putin. That is beyond disturbing, and I think it is not in furtherance of our national security interests.

In the interest of time today, I will not say more because I know we are over time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks prior to the vote.

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

CHINA

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, it is interesting to hear my colleagues talk about China and COVID and our response. I think many of us looked at 2019 and felt like that was really a significant year for U.S.-China relations. It marked the 40th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations between Washington and Beijing, and we also finalized a phase 1 trade deal.

This led many of us to being optimistic, but remember that 2019 also marked the 70th anniversary of Chairman Mao's ascension to the chairmanship of the Chinese Communist Party and the 30th anniversary of the massacre at Tiananmen Square.

When you start asking questions about that history and how it has informed the decisions of current Chinese leadership, the capitalist facade that has been so carefully constructed by the propagandists in Beijing starts to peel away, and it starts to crack.

After decades of espionage, military aggression, and horrific political violence inflicted on their own people, many here in Washington have grown numb to Chinese hostility. They kind of expect or accept that is the way they are going to act. That is the only explanation I could come up with for the shock that rippled through this town when we discovered that the Chinese Communist Party spent 51 days muzzling the doctors, lawyers, and journalists who desperately tried to warn the rest of the world about the growing threat from the novel coronavirus.

Our relationship with China has reached a tipping point. We will never be able to go back to what had been that cautious optimism that we had in 2019.

Fortunately, it looks like both my colleagues here in Washington and many of our allies are allowing themselves to process the threat posed by Beijing's standard operating procedures. The UK has banned the use of equipment from Chinese tech giant Huawei for their ongoing 5G rollout, and France has implemented policies that restrict the use of Huawei's products. These decisions are giving some hope to the people I am talking to back in Tennessee every single day. They are happy to see that allies are following in our footsteps. This is a good thing. It is an opportunity for us to role-model how you work to unravel a relationship with an aggressor.

They would also want me to tell you that they appreciate the Senate's growing bipartisan support for legislation like my SAMC Act, which will secure our pharmaceutical supply chains from Chinese interference, and Senator MCSALLY's Civil Justice for Victims of COVID Act, which will allow Americans harmed by this pandemic to sue the Chinese Communist Party officials in U.S. court.

But we all know that there is no single-shot bill we can use to decouple from China and put control back in the hands of American businesses, educators, institutions, and innovators. We have to begin to unravel these ties with China. Now, there are a lot of people in this town who think that this is impossible, and they will say: Oh, that is ill-advised. You do not want to try to unravel from China.

I think they are wrong, and I think that we can and we must do this. But lipservice is not going to cut it. Over the past few months we have talked at length about what needs to be done, but, with few exceptions, we are light on specifics. So last Wednesday I published a white paper laying out the current state of affairs between the United States and China and talked about what got us to this position. Then, I have 120 specific policy recommendations that Congress can use as a basis for future legislation, whether it is trade or agriculture or telecommunications or 5G or our military complex. I would like to use my remaining time to lay out a few of these recommendations as a place to start.

By now most Americans are at least familiar with the term "Belt and Road Initiative." This is an initiative program the Chinese have used to buy their way. They have bought their way into the good graces of governments in Asia, Africa, and Europe. The trillions of dollars in investment buys inroads and influence across countries of every economic background and in organizations like the United Nations.

While we cannot and should not compete dollar for dollar, we should partner with our allies to prevent struggling governments from falling into this debt diplomacy or these debt traps. We must also secure our supply chains across every sector of our economy and bring critical manufacturing

and technologies back to the United States.

I mentioned the SAMC Act. It would incentivize companies to bring their manufacturing operations back to the United States and also fund partnerships between pharmaceutical companies and universities so that they can train the workforce we need in order to pull this manufacturing out of China and bring it back to communities right here.

We should not hesitate in moving forward on this legislation. Once we invest in this new technology and infrastructure, we are going to have to invest in securing it by securing our emerging 5G networks. To that end, we need to make more spectrum available for the commercial wireless sector to ensure our continued leadership in 5G and other emerging technologies. If we fail to do so, we risk ceding ground to China in the standard-setting bodies that are going to define 5G internationally.

We will not be able to stop China alone. We must look toward those international organizations, as well as allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, to help us deter Chinese aggression and foster stable economic growth. This includes providing support for Hong Kong and Taiwan and promoting universal human rights standards, both in China and across the globe. We will also increase defense investment in the region through a newly created Pacific Deterrence Initiative.

Most importantly, we must accept the fact that, at its core, China is not a normal country. It does not behave like a normal country. When Xi Jinping ascended to the head of the Chinese Communist Party in 2012, many assumed he was going to act as a reformer and turn away from the Maoist thought, but, predictably, he did not.

We cannot simply wait for this problem to go away. Last week, Beijing escalated tensions by ordering Americans to vacate our only consulate in western China, distancing its abuses in Tibet and Xinjiang from American diplomatic personnel. You know what. It is not going to stop with this. They are accelerating their aggression.

We have to become more independent of China. We are too dependent on them at this point. It is time for the United States to deny this era of Chinese impunity and change the way we are doing business. It is time to reestablish rules to guide the global economy, to encourage our allies to join us, and to hold Beijing accountable.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, if cloture is invoked on the Kan nomination, the confirmation vote occur at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, July 30. I further ask that the cloture vote on the Kaplan nomination occur at 2:45 p.m. today and that,

if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate immediately vote on his confirmation. I further ask that the cloture vote on the McFerran nomination occur at 4:45 p.m. today and that, if cloture is invoked, all postcloture time be considered expired and the Senate immediately vote on her confirmation. Finally, I ask that, if any of these nominations are confirmed, that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

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 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 Derek Kan, of California, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, John Cornyn, Lindsey Graham, John Boozman, Lamar Alexander, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Marsha Blackburn, Richard Burr, Mike Crapo, Pat Roberts, James E. Risch, Shelley Moore Capito, Michael B. Enzi, Mitt Romney, John Barrasso.

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 Derek Kan, of California, to be Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) is necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 76, nays 22, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 147 Ex.]

YEAS—76

| | | |
|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Alexander | Cortez Masto | Hassan |
| Barrasso | Cotton | Hawley |
| Blackburn | Cramer | Hoey |
| Blunt | Crapo | Hyde-Smith |
| Boozman | Daines | Inhofe |
| Braun | Durbin | Johnson |
| Burr | Enzi | Jones |
| Capito | Ernst | Kaine |
| Carper | Feinstein | Kennedy |
| Casey | Fischer | King |
| Cassidy | Gardner | Klobuchar |
| Collins | Graham | Lankford |
| Coons | Grassley | Leahy |
| Cornyn | Harris | Lee |

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------------|
| Loeffler | Risch | Sinema |
| Manchin | Roberts | Smith |
| McConnell | Romney | Sullivan |
| McSally | Rosen | Thune |
| Moran | Rounds | Tillis |
| Murkowski | Rubio | Toomey |
| Murphy | Sasse | Warner |
| Paul | Schatz | Whitehouse |
| Perdue | Scott (FL) | Wicker |
| Peters | Scott (SC) | Young |
| Portman | Shaheen | |
| Reed | Shelby | |

NAYS—22

| | | |
|------------|------------|------------|
| Baldwin | Gillibrand | Stabenow |
| Bennet | Heinrich | Tester |
| Blumenthal | Hirono | Udall |
| Booker | Menendez | Van Hollen |
| Brown | Merkley | Warren |
| Cantwell | Murray | Wyden |
| Cardin | Sanders | |
| Duckworth | Schumer | |

NOT VOTING—2

| | |
|------|--------|
| Cruz | Markey |
|------|--------|

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 76, the nays are 22.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Minnesota.

CORONAVIRUS

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to address the impact that the coronavirus pandemic is having on rural America.

We know that it affects every area of this country. In the urban areas of our country, we have seen what this has meant to the people who are in crowded housing and to the people who work every day in our urban hospitals. We have seen it in the suburban areas with small businesses and with moms who are trying to figure out how to handle the summer with their kids, but the rural areas sometimes don't get as much attention. The Presiding Officer knows of this in his home State of Oklahoma. He understands this.

There are a lot of rural areas in our country that have suffered as well. They have suffered not only because of spikes in the virus, like we have seen recently, but also because of the economic implications—a farm economy that was already in trouble because of the price of commodities, because of world trade barriers, because of weather events. You name it. It has affected rural areas in a big, big way.

According to several recent reports, as of July 14, one-third of all rural counties are now considered red zones, places that in the last week of testing added 100 or more new cases per 100,000 people. Between June 13 and July 12, the number of new cases in rural counties increased by 150 percent. That is why we must take immediate action to provide the critical support that the rural areas need.

They are areas that may not have easy access to hospitals or that may have smaller hospitals. That is why the issue of funding for State and local governments, as long as we make sure the rural areas are able to share in this funding as well, is so important for the rural hospitals, for their equipment—all of this.

This is beyond what we all know already of the food supply chains and our nutrition programs. We certainly don't want a situation in which one can't get

homegrown American food. Just as we have learned with the medical equipment supply chain, we can't always get the swabs that we need for so much of our testing and the like.

I just want to make clear that people sometimes see rural areas as though they are out there, doing fine—all of these idyllic pictures. I don't think they understand the struggle, the fact that rural poverty for kids is often higher than it is in urban areas, and this was before the pandemic. To me, the pandemic has just put a big magnifying glass on some of these disparities that we knew already existed.

There is a more senior population in rural areas, so you have people trying to keep themselves safe. They are isolated in seniors' homes or in areas of smaller assisted living, where they are very, very isolated, even more so than they might be, but where they have their families nearby who can at least visit them through a window. That is even harder. So, really, all of these challenges conspire to make this a topic that we must discuss.

The operation of public hospitals, long-term care facilities, and first responder services during a public health crisis requires a significant mobilization of resources, and this relief package that I am pleased we are debating now—I would like to see more movement, but at least the negotiations are ongoing—must include the funding for rural area hospitals as well as for State and local governments. Local governments in rural areas are facing both falling revenues and increased emergency expenses. They have smaller margins under which they operate, which threatens their ability to provide essential public services and their ability to continue paying teachers and first responders.

The public health crisis is putting incredible pressure on our public health system, and many rural hospitals and health systems already have limited ICU beds and resources. The disproportionately low number of healthcare providers across rural America has been brought into sharp focus by this crisis. We have already heard stories of the hospitals that were once delivering babies but that lost one OB/GYN doctor and could no longer deliver babies. Then the family has to go miles and miles and hours and hours just to have the delivery of a baby in a safe situation. That is why we need to do much. It is the funding.

There is a bill that Senator GRASSLEY and I have that will actually allow some of the smaller hospitals—this was prepandemic—to exist in different circumstances, like emergency room circumstances, so they don't entirely close down. It is why I have led the reauthorization of the Conrad 30 Waiver Program, which has brought in over 15,000 immigrant doctors to fill the gaps. We also know there are issues of personnel in these hospitals—nurses and doctors. This is a program that allows for immigrant students who have