

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,