

The President also has a point about the Commission to rename military bases that are part of the Defense Authorization Act. Unfortunately, the amendment that was adopted in the Armed Services Committee undermines the role of Congress, once the Commission makes its report, to do as Congress believes should be done. But the truth is, as we have learned from our friends across the pond in the UK, no Parliament can bind a future Parliament, and indeed no Congress can bind a future Congress. That is true. So if these are things the President believes we should address and that Members of Congress and the new administration believe we should address, we will address them, and we have an opportunity to do that, but we should not try to do that on this bill and risk the loss of this important piece of legislation now in its 60th year of adoption.

The Defense Department is hands down the largest employer in the United States, with nearly 2.9 million employees, including both servicemembers and civilians. These men and women can be found in more than 160 countries around the world and on all seven continents. Supporting them is a Herculean task, and the NDAA is a significant way in which we do that.

The Defense authorization bill also includes a 3-percent pay raise for our troops and additional support for their families, such as career support for military spouses and quality childcare on military bases. Given the fact that we have an All-Volunteer military, it is important we not only support our servicemembers who wear the uniform but the families who support them as well. I have heard it said, you can recruit a member of the U.S. military, but if you want to retain them, you have to take care of their family, and I believe that is absolutely true.

This bill also ensures previous reforms to improve the quality of military housing and healthcare are implemented appropriately. Those who serve in our military have made tremendous sacrifices in order to safeguard our freedoms and our way of life. I regard our support for them and for our national defense the No. 1 priority of the Federal Government. Everything else pales in significance. So we should do everything in our power to ensure that they and their families are appropriately taken care of.

Beyond pay and benefits, that means giving the military members the training, the facilities, and the equipment they need not only to succeed on the job but to return home safely.

The NDAA authorizes military construction projects across the country, including \$183 million in Texas, which will bring serious updates and improvements to our military bases. At Joint Base San Antonio, this funding will provide for a range of new facilities, including a barracks, a flight simulation system, and an F-16 Mission Training Center.

At Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, it will support an F-35 operations and

maintenance facility, vehicle maintenance shop, and an aircraft maintenance hangar. It will also support fuel facilities at Fort Hood and provide additional funding for the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, which maintains a large portion of our nuclear stockpile. Maintained and modernized facilities are a critical component to military readiness, and this legislation makes tremendous investments in our facilities around the world. It will authorize 93 new F-35 Joint Strike Fighters that will be built by Texans in Fort Worth. As we work to counter increasingly sophisticated adversaries around the world, this investment in our military readiness could not be more important.

In addition to supporting our members in uniform and ensuring they are ready for action when called upon, the NDAA helps our military take stock of the evolving threat landscape and ensures that our country is taking active steps to counter threats on the horizon.

In recent years, China and Russia have risen to the top of the threats to our country and to world order, with China now assuming the No. 1 role. We remember the Cold War after World War II, where we sought to contain and counter Soviet expansionism, and, actually, the mutual deterrents that we have established during that time has worked. But China is a unique challenge, and none of the old rules apply to China.

They are increasingly belligerent and well resourced and continue to demonstrate a lack of respect not only for the United States and our closest allies but for basic human rights.

The Chinese Government continues its disturbing and unacceptable genocide against the Uighur people. The so-called political reeducation camps are nothing more than concentration camps where Uighurs are tortured. Recent reporting has found that the treatment in these camps often includes forced abortions, birth control, and sterilization. And China continues to chip away at the freedoms and autonomy of Hong Kong, notwithstanding its promises to the contrary, using a so-called national security law to extinguish opposition to the Chinese Communist Party and to deny the people of Hong Kong the freedoms that they were promised.

As I mentioned, though, China doesn't stand alone as a threat to the world. Russia has become increasingly aggressive around the world in its effort to wreak chaos and sow discord. Since their attempts to interfere with the 2016 election, we have witnessed aggression after aggression from Russia, not just here in the cyber space but around the world.

From Russia-backed mercenaries fighting in the Middle East to its attempt to steal the coronavirus vaccine research and, in the last few weeks, a massive cyber attack on U.S. Government agencies, Russia continues to undermine the United States and our allies and shows no signs of stopping.

It has become increasingly clear, if it wasn't already, that China and Russia adhere to no rules and no principles but their own. As the national defense strategy outlined, the threats posed by these two countries are increasingly dangerous, and countering these growing threats requires a clear and concentrated effort from Congress. That is exactly why passing the NDAA—the National Defense Authorization Act—is so important.

This legislation prioritizes strategic competition with China and Russia and takes a strong approach to counter the threats posed by adversaries around the world. It will build on the progress we have made in recent years to strengthen our military after the draconian cuts during the Obama-Biden administration and achieve peace through strength.

Over the last several decades, the NDAA has provided an annual opportunity for us to take stock of the evolving threat landscape and ensure that our national defense is prepared to meet the challenges not only of today but of tomorrow, and this year's Defense Authorization Act is no exception.

It takes a strong approach to counter the threats posed by our adversaries around the world. It invests in modernized national defense that is critical to maintaining peace through strength, and it provides support for our servicemembers and their families. Above all, it sends a message to the world that our country is and will remain the global military leader.

I have supported this legislation on the Senate floor many times, and I will do so once again when the opportunity to vote to override the veto presents itself.

One of Congress's most critical responsibilities is to provide for the common defense, and the NDAA—the National Defense Authorization Act—is how we will deliver.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Madam President, I was disappointed last week when President Trump vetoed the NDAA.

This will be the 60th year that we have had the NDAA. The NDAA is the National Defense Authorization Act, and I have said so many times, countless times—on the floor of the House and on the floor of the Senate—that this is the most important bill that we have. Some people don't agree with that, but I do.

That is what we are supposed to be doing here. We are supposed to be defending America. And there is a lot to do. We are in the most threatening situation that we have ever been in.

I sometimes look back and think of the good old days of the Cold War when you had two superpowers out there. We knew what they had; they knew what we had. Mutual assurance of destruction meant something at that time. If you kill us, we kill you, and everyone is happy.

But that is living in the past. But anymore now, with the weaponry that is out there, you can get one outside group that doesn't have any resources at all, and they have the ability to wipe out another country. So it is a real threat that we are up against.

I do chair the committee called the Senate Armed Services Committee, and, of course, I have been very active in the National Defense Authorization Act every year since—well, since 1987. It is a long time.

So I am proud of the conference report that we had. The NDAA right here—our vote in this Senate was 84 to 13. Wow. You can't find that kind of togetherness in a cause anywhere else. But it puts members of the families of the military first.

I share President Trump's frustration about section 230. I know that it is a complicated thing. The majority of people in America don't know what that is all about, but section 230 is something that has nothing to do with the military—nothing at all.

The committee that I chair is the Armed Services Committee. That would be found in the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee. The Judiciary Committee is chaired by Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM. He does a great job of chairing that. That is where any kind of reform in section 230 should come from.

I agree that the President should have the authority to determine troop levels. That is what we have in this bill. We have the President making those decisions. That is why we made sure that the final NDAA gave the President very broad authority in determining troop levels all around, and we have looked at them in Western Europe and Eastern Europe. We have looked at them in Ethiopia—in Afghanistan and other places around the world.

So we look at what we have done, and I was going to mention—I have been down here several times talking about the President and what he has done and the great job that he has done for the United States. And I am going to wind up with some comments on a card that I put together. I put this card together back 2 years ago, talking about the top 10 Trump accomplishments. I think it is important that people remember that. We have a lot of people down here forgetting about all the really good things that have happened, so I am going to talk about that in a minute.

But I am here today because we have to pass the NDAA. This would be the 60th year in a row that we have the NDAA, and it is necessary to have. It is the most important bill of the year. I have believed this for a long time. You have heard me say it before.

I always stand with our troops. The military servicemembers and their families will suffer if we don't enact it for the 60th year. If the NDAA is not passed, more than 200,000 military families will see smaller paychecks in January because the special pays and the bonuses for hazard pay are all part of this bill.

Additionally, it would hurt the areas where the military is having the most serious problem. In a way, it is kind of a mixed bag because we have—prior to the pandemic coming along, and that was in about March of this year—before that happened, we had the best economy, I could argue, that we have had in my lifetime, and all these things were very, very good. Then, of course, when that happened everything changed.

Now, one of the problems you have when you have such a great economy is that you have a lot of competition. We have to have a military force. That military force has to have resources. They have to have the ability to step in because we don't know where the next threat is going to come from.

And with people with special abilities—now I am talking about pilots, cyber experts, engineers, and doctors—that is where we have a problem. We don't have enough of them—pilots. I have been an active pilot now for longer than most Members here have been alive, and I know that back during the previous administration, the Obama administration, we had a real serious problem because we were not able to attract the pilots at that time because that was when we had a President who—he wasn't ashamed of it—his top priority was not defending America. He had other priorities.

So, consequently, we went through a period the last 5 years—the last 5 years of his administration were the years 2010 through 2015, and during that timeframe he reduced the funding for the military by 25 percent. At the same time he did that, China was increasing theirs in that same timeframe by 83 percent. So we have China increasing their military expenditures by 83 percent at the same time we are reducing ours by 25 percent. So we had serious problems there.

One of the areas, when people are cutting the military, that they do it where it won't be as noticeable is in the flying hours. So we had pilots out there, but they weren't flying the hours that they needed to fly to keep their proficiency up, and, consequently, a lot of them left and went to the airlines and went other places because they were wanting to be flying the hours. That is one of the problems that we had during that time.

So we have the military's ability to recruit and retain servicemembers who

are in the shortest supply. As I mentioned, that would be things like cyber experts and engineers and doctors, so they have the skill sets that need to be done out there.

Of course, this President came along, and we started rebuilding the military. I will always remember being at the White House during a time that we were talking about what we were going to do with the military, and he actually looked over at me, and he said: What do you think we need to do with the military? I said: We are going to have to rebuild the military. It is going to cost something like \$750 billion before it is over. He said: That is what we should do; we need to start with that.

And this President, with his leadership, took us with a new priority in defending America and building our military, and it happened.

So we have the things that will happen if we don't pass this thing—the education of children for military families. There is a thing called the impact aid. Impact aid comes about when you don't get the tax base increase with the added enrollment into the schools of the children of military families. So they have impact because they don't pay the taxes.

So the impact aid is the amount of money that supplements that. It is not just in my State of Oklahoma but throughout the country. It ensures that children of military families receive a quality education by supplementing the school districts, the budgets, where they are required.

If the NDAA is not passed, military construction projects—I have one in my State of Oklahoma that is one that would—let's see; where is that? Yes, we have a thing where we have an ammunition depot, a demolition shop, for one. This is something where we have gone through a lot of BRAC rounds—that is Base Realignment and Closure Commissions—and we have increased the size of our ammunition demolition activities substantially. And we are doing most of it now right there in Oklahoma. Well, this has a new demolition shop in there so we can get rid of a lot of these things we were not able to get rid of.

So we have military construction projects in 38 States, and one happens to be in the State of Maine. It is very significant that they be able to do these projects. If the military construction doesn't happen, both an authorization and appropriation—people don't understand this because it is kind of talked around, but in order for something to get done, you have to have it authorized. That is what the committee that I chair does—authorizes the military projects.

Then it has to be appropriated. The appropriators come along, and they put the money in there. That is how this system works.

If the NDAA is not passed, the military won't be able to increase the end strength—or the total number of troops in the military services—where

that is needed to address the growing threats. End strength increases don't happen without authorization. You can't appropriate it.

So if the NDAA should not be passed, the Pentagon loses the ability to quickly and efficiently process security clearance investigations. Right now there is a backlog because it takes a long time to do this, but this has a streamlining provision in it that is going to make that a lot easier so we will be able to get security clearances.

All these things are tied into this bill. The DOD, if we didn't pass this thing, would lack the authority to pay the nonmilitary personnel on hospital shifts. They are the ones who are doing the great job right now with the COVID response.

That is just kind of a snapshot of what we are counting on to support our troops in the field, the bare minimum we need. Without the NDAA, we lose all of that and also lose all the other policies.

Right now, this bill makes China the primary strategic threat. I think we all understand that. We have strategic threats from Russia and China. Last year, we had the European part addressed. This year, the bill that is pending right now that we are going to try to get passed for this year—and I think we will successfully do that—is going to be concentrating on the Pacific area; that is, China and the things that China is doing that people don't—many people don't realize the threat that is out there.

Right now we are up, as I understand it, to seven different areas where the Chinese are actually building, creating islands in the South China Sea. This is something that is different than has ever been done before. I contend and have always contended it is illegal, but they are still doing it. They are doing it, and that is the effort that they are making there.

If you go into these islands where they are rebuilding, it is almost as if China is preparing for World War III—all of it. This is what is happening right now.

Right now we know about this SolarWinds hack, the hack that we are facing. That is something where we have language to deal with that in the Defense authorization bill.

The new "hunt forward" authority that allows our cyber operators to do more work to find malicious actors proactively, this is something that we need to get done for the defense of our country.

It implements the Cyber Solarium Commission and the recommendations. There are 27 recommendations that they have in this commission. And it establishes a new National Cyber Director.

These are things where it is a moving target. There are a lot of things that we are doing now that we should have been doing before, and it took China and Russia to kind of forge ahead of us, as they did in the previous administra-

tion, to remind us that we have these very serious problems. Our troops need the NDAA. It is our responsibility to make sure that they have the equipment, training, and resources to complete the mission and return home safely.

I will close with this one reminder. On December 29, 1777, 243 years ago today, General George Washington wrote to the Continental Congress imploring that they needed to provide the resources his troops needed. He wrote:

I hope that the supplies they will be able to furnish in aid of those, which Congress may immediately import themselves, will be equal and competent to every demand. If they do not, I fear—I am satisfied the Troops will never be in a situation to answer the Public expectation and perform the duties required of them.

That is as true today as it was in 1777. We have to do that.

We look at the national security wins of this President. I think people don't talk about that as much. We have identified China as the No. 1 adversary. That was in the NDS, the national defense survey. It was put together by 12 of the real experts—6 Republicans, 6 Democrats. It has been the blueprint for our military ever since that time, about 3 years ago. They identified China as the major threat.

There is \$2.5 trillion to rebuild the military. That is what we were able to get done. We increased the size of the military, replaced obsolete equipment, and made new investments in future tech. Hypersonics is a good example. Both Russia and China are ahead of us in the area of hypersonics; it is the new "state of the art." There is a pay raise for the troops.

They took out the terrorist leaders. How many people remember Baghdadi and Soleimani? They were the top terrorists in the world. They are gone now. This President, this administration took care of that.

We established the Space Force. The Space Force was the first new force that was established in many, many years. I wasn't really sold on it at first because I thought we were doing a pretty good job. It wasn't coordinated. You had different military units doing it, and they weren't even really talking to each other. That is what we put together. This President provided the leadership in doing that.

There is the widow's tax. Everybody remembers that. That was something that had to be done. Others talked about it. This President did it.

Then the ISIS caliphate was destroyed. There is the Abraham Accords. They supported Israel through new security assistance. We know that is going on today. All these things this President has done and has done a great job.

I do want to mention this, and I think it is worthwhile, really, because we know what won't happen if we don't pass this bill. We won't get the bonuses necessary; I already mentioned that. The impact aid, I mentioned that. Mili-

tary construction project authorizations, we would not have that. Full pay for DOD civilians, that has to be done. That has been talked about by a lot of administrations but not really done.

I will finalize this by talking about China. Nothing in the bill helps China any way at all. There is a group called the American Enterprise Institute. That is a group that is kind of the conservative conscience that evaluates programs that come along. They said: "This bill has the most substantial and consequential China-related provisions since the 2000 NDAA." They are talking about this bill and what it does for China. It establishes the Pacific Deterrence. We talked about the European Deterrence last year in the NDAA bill. This is the Pacific Deterrence. That is China we are talking about. It shifts the supply chains away from China in semiconductors, circuit boards, and pharmaceuticals, and it stimulates the economy in those ways. It brings Chinese malign national security activities into light so we know what they are doing—who the good guys are, who the bad guys are.

This supports Taiwan. We have talked about that for a long period of time. This bill accelerates that program.

It prevents Chinese intellectual property theft.

I have a whole list here.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this list be inserted after my comments.

What I would like to wind up with, if I brought it—I did. Two years ago, I put this card together. This is when I realized the media hates Trump. People are not aware of all the good things he did in those first couple of years. People were not aware of it.

First of all, on the card—I am going to run over these. Biggest tax cuts. We learned a lesson back there during a Democratic administration. John Kennedy said the best way to get more revenue in for the Great Society programs that they were advocating at that time was to reduce marginal rates and that would increase revenue. It did. Unfortunately, John Kennedy died before he could reap the benefits that came with that, but it worked. Of course, others followed him, including Presidents Clinton, President Bush, and others, by reducing the rates. That also increased the revenue.

What this President did that was different than the rest of them is that he did not just decrease the rates—the tax rates—but he also decreased all the overregulation.

How many people know that, back during the Obama administration, we had a rule that we were adhering to that said if you were a domestic oil and gas producer in the United States of America and you were in competition with China or somebody else, you had to give them our whole playbook on how we put together our system over here and all the elements. And that put us at a disadvantage with our competitors in China and in energy.

I was happy that I used to say, after Obama got out of office, that the war on fossil fuels was over for a while. Look at the energy dominance now. We are the global leader in oil and gas production: a 277-percent growth in crude exports, a 132-percent increase in coal exports, a 52-percent increase in natural gas exports. These are exports. That is what we are doing now in the United States as a result of the efforts of this President and bringing our economy around.

Crackdown on illegal migration. Nobody wanted the wall, they said. Now people realize that is where a lot of the bad people were getting in.

We moved the Embassy. Every Democrat and Republican President, in my memory, tried to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. They all talked about it. This President went in and did it.

He enacted the infrastructure bill, the WRDA bill, or the Water Resources Development Act, and the FAA reauthorization.

And on the judges we have, not just Kavanaugh and Gorsuch, but I think our number is up to about 225 new judges.

He repealed the overregulation of the Dodd-Frank rules. Anyone in business will tell you that that was one of the major accomplishments of this President, President Trump—and the record employment.

But then I would say that the 10th and last one I mention to everyone who will listen is what he did for the military. We went from the time of dropping down in the last 5 years of the Obama administration by 25 percent, while China was increasing 83 percent. Now we have rebuilt that military. That is why the NDAA is so significant right now and to make sure that that gets passed and that we are able to have that. That is what this vote is all about.

The NDAA, or National Defense Authorization Act, is the most important bill of the year. That is why we are doing it, and that is why we are here today during this holiday season.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

TRUMP NATIONAL SECURITY WINS

Identified China as #1 adversary in 2018 NDS; \$2.5 trillion to rebuild military; Increased size of military; Replaced obsolete equipment; New investments in future tech—hypersonics, AI, cyber; 3.1% pay raise—biggest in a decade; Took out terrorist leaders (Baghdadi, Soleimani); Established Space Force; Eliminated widow's tax; Destroyed ISIS caliphate; Historic Abraham Accords; Supported Israel through new security assistance; Withdrew from Iran deal; Withdrew from INF Treaty; Maximized arms sales; Improved military spouse employment; Rescued 55 hostages in 24 countries; Secured \$130 billion in new NATO spending, growing to \$400 billion by 2024.

Mr. INHOFE. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it is an unusual sight of a Senator in the Capitol between Christmas and New Year's. This is the one time we really try to reserve for our personal and family responsibilities. Our families, like others, look forward to the Christmas season. It is the one time of the year we desperately try to find ways to come together.

Of course, COVID-19 intervened and made that more challenging. But, even so, the notion of coming back to Washington this week and staying, perhaps, more than a day to try to finish our work is unusual, and the circumstances surrounding it are extraordinary, as well, not the least of which is the fact that we have two bills that have to be thought of in the context of our responsibilities.

First and foremost is the National Defense Authorization Act. This month, both the House and the Senate passed, with overwhelming bipartisan majorities, the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

Senator INHOFE of Oklahoma, a Republican, was on the floor before me. He and Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island put in more time than most Members can appreciate to make sure that this bill really served our military and the goal of national security. They came up with a good bill, one I was proud to support it.

This annual legislation has been signed into law for six consecutive decades. When the Senate fails to do anything, they always do the National Defense Authorization Act. It shows Congress can come together, at least on this measure, when it comes to supporting our men and women in uniform and keeping our country safe.

This year, the bill authorized \$740.5 billion in defense spending. It provides another 3 percent, well-deserved, pay raise for our troops. It also recognizes that many in the Armed Forces are on the frontlines here at home, as well, helping fight the ongoing COVID-19 epidemic, providing our troops with necessary benefits and protections, including a 10-percent increase in hazardous duty pay.

The bill also includes a number of provisions that I authored and supported, including language expressing strong support for the Baltic States and Ukraine, especially in the face of continued, unforgivable Russia aggression. It requires the renaming of military bases in the United States which were once named in honor of Confederate generals, those who served in the Confederacy in an attempt to secede

from the Union and to defend the institution of slavery and have been enshrined in the names of these bases for many, many years. This effort to rename them is long, long overdue. It tries to correct and recognize the mistakes of our past and really address the sensitive racial inequities at the Pentagon when it comes to this decision-making.

It places restrictions on the transfer of military equipment to law enforcement agencies. We have to address the issue of the militarization of our police at a time when we are, frankly, making an assessment of the role of police to make certain that the overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers—those who are good, principled, civic-minded individuals—is honored and that those who fail to meet the test are removed from service.

It expands benefits to our veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange during the Vietnam war. There are 191,000 Vietnam-era veterans in my State of Illinois. Many of them were exposed to toxins, such as Agent Orange, during their service and now are paying the price.

It makes it easier for victims of military sexual trauma to report instances of such crime and expand support for survivors. The most recent, horrible incident at Fort Hood was a reminder of what we need to do to bring the military into the 21st century when it comes to respecting the rights of all people, men and women.

It strengthens safeguards against foreign cyberattacks. We know how important that is since the recent revelation confirmed by Secretary of State Pompeo that Russia is at work again in its attempting to compromise our Federal agencies, their data, their information, and the security secrets that they keep for our protection.

It authorizes funding for PFAS-related research. If you have never heard of the phrase “PFAS” before, I can tell you that you are bound to hear it in the future. This was used as a flame retardant and in some other capacities on many Air Force bases and military bases around the United States. We are finding that it is still there and is still dangerous. We need to put money into remediation to help these military installations, including the Scott Air Force Base in Belleville, IL, where PFAS was detected earlier this year.

Still, despite all of the good things in this bill and the bipartisanship that supported it, President Trump decided to veto the bill—one of his rare vetoes. He prefers we continue to honor the Confederate leaders who committed treasonous atrocities in order to preserve slavery. I don't think that this is reflective of the United States of today or its values, but that is his position.

When he was called out for this racist inclination, he changed the reason for his veto. He claimed the bill didn't do enough to fight China or that we should include a measure to address liability issues for tech companies—