

the way forward. This begins with a clearer understanding of what the New START treaty accomplishes and what it doesn't.

To begin with, the New START treaty is not a panacea, and extending the agreement does not prevent an arms race with just the stroke of a pen; nor is it an unfair agreement that locks in Russian advantages. It is simply an agreement between the United States and Russia to limit some but not all of the categories of nuclear arms. China is not a party to this agreement.

As critics have pointed out, the treaty's counting rules obscure the true number of deployed nuclear weapons, and it has not prevented Russia's build-up of other kinds of nuclear arms not covered by its limits. Some have described these as "loopholes" for Russia, but they are well-known limitations that also apply equally to both sides.

Since the treaty was signed, the United States has chosen not to invest in new nuclear weapons outside of the treaty's limits. Well, Russia has done the opposite, and they continue to expand their nuclear arsenal. I disagree with my colleagues who see that as a failure of the treaty. It is a failure in the Russian Government for continuing to build up its nuclear arsenal instead of matching our restraint and lowering those tensions.

But it would also be a failure on our part if we had assumed Russia would refrain from building these systems out of the goodness of their heart. Indeed, Russia's behavior since the New START treaty was signed reminds us that it continues to seek a competitive advantage, and in order to achieve its goals, it will go around the limits, as it has done with the New START treaty, or it will go straight through them, as it did with the INF Treaty.

So Russia's nuclear capabilities continue to expand, as does China's build-up of nuclear arms. That New START hasn't prevented these from occurring reflects the fact that the New START treaty simply does not account for the full spectrum of nuclear challenges, and thus, with the agreement to extend the treaty in place, serious threats still remain that really demand our attention.

The growth of both Russia's and China's arsenals must be addressed. Some have called for the Biden administration to immediately pursue talks to this end.

While hurrying to convene another diplomatic summit may have a reassuring appearance to some, diplomacy is not an end unto itself. It is a means to an end.

It is important to remember that negotiating limits on Russia's tactical weapons and bringing China into the arms control process have long been U.S. diplomatic objectives. Indeed, the Obama-Biden administration sought these goals, as did the Trump administration, which deserves credit for elevating them to the highest levels. However, the consistent refusal of both

Russia and China to engage in serious talks demonstrates that neither nation feels sufficient incentive to negotiate. New attempts at negotiations without addressing this wouldn't achieve a different result.

In truth, what is needed isn't another conference in a European capital; it is a serious effort here at home to create incentives for both Russia and China to halt their nuclear buildups and to have them choose a different path.

Congress and the administration should work together to strengthen the hands of our negotiators. To that end, we can start by rejecting calls being made by some advocates to cut our nuclear forces unilaterally or allow them to age into obsolescence by delaying their much needed modernization. These calls are not new; however, our senior military leaders have consistently advised against such courses of action, and the past two administrations have rejected them as well. They should be rejected again.

As most in this Chamber know, our nuclear forces have aged far beyond their designed lifetime. After delaying and deferring the modernization of our nuclear forces for decades, we are now at an inflection point. As Admiral Richard, the current STRATCOM commander, testified last year, "Many of the modernization and sustainment efforts necessary to ensure the deterrent's viability have zero schedule margin and are late-to-need."

His point is clear. Further delay will result in capabilities aging-out with no replacements available. Our nuclear deterrent would literally wither on the vine. This would have a number of disastrous consequences for our security at a time when nuclear threats are growing, and it would also dramatically undermine future diplomatic efforts to negotiate limits with Russia and China on their arsenals. After all, why would either nation agree to new rounds of arms reductions if they knew that the United States was cutting its forces anyway, regardless of whether they agreed to do likewise?

We must keep this in mind when we hear calls to dismantle the triad or cancel our modernization programs. Doing so would make our country less safe by cutting the forces needed to deter aggression, and it would make the world less safe by ensuring that the United States is never in a position again to push for real reductions to Russian and Chinese nuclear forces.

Instead of reducing incentives for Russia and China to negotiate, Congress and the administration should work together to strengthen them and set the conditions for successful diplomatic efforts in the future.

Thank you, Madam President.

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.

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

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

NOMINATION OF DENIS RICHARD McDONOUGH

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, today I rise in support of my friend and fellow Minnesotan, Denis McDonough, as President Biden's nominee for Secretary of Veterans Affairs. And no one knows but you, the Senator from Illinois, Madam President, about how important this job is for our veterans.

Denis grew up in Stillwater, MN, which is right near the Wisconsin border. He is a grandson of Irish immigrants, the son of devout Catholic parents, and brother to 10 siblings. He attended St. John's College in Collegeville, MN, and in addition to graduating summa cum laude, he played safety on the very proud championship St. John's football team.

I have been privileged to call Denis a friend for years, and I know he will serve our country well as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. As he has done his whole life, he will honor the promises our country has made to our veterans and their families.

Denis's commitment to our Nation's veterans was clear during his time as President Obama's Chief of Staff, where he made sure that every decision impacting our servicemembers, veterans, and their families was befitting of their sacrifices. Showing respect and gratitude for our Nation's veterans is not something Denis just prioritizes; it is a value for him.

As we know from his time as President Obama's Chief of Staff, he is an adept manager who understands how to tackle complex challenges throughout our government, which will be vital for the next Secretary.

As we also know, the VA is facing a number of challenges, from helping veterans to stay safe during the pandemic to improving the quality of care for veterans around the country. These are not simple problems, and these are not simple challenges, and they will require, as you have shown, Madam President, true leadership and vision, which has been, again, the hallmark of Denis's time in public service.

I also know that he will work tirelessly to find bipartisan solutions, and I think you see that from the support that he has gotten throughout the country as well as on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, where I was honored to introduce him when he started on this journey of Senate approval, and it has never been more important than ever to unite our country and get that kind of support. So much of our work with our veterans is about keeping our promises and showing respect, not just in words but in actions.

What other Senators who don't know Denis as well or are new to Washington—what they may see as time goes on, they will see the qualities of honor and loyalty in Denis's commitment to his family, which also includes his family in Minnesota. I know this firsthand. He has so many relatives that you can't go anywhere without

running into some McDonough. You see it in how he has treated everyone he has worked with, when he worked in the Senate, when he worked as President Obama's Chief of Staff. I also will assure my fellow Senators that he will listen to Senators. He will have respect for the people who work here. You see it every day in how he always puts his country first.

During his distinguished career, Denis has approached each and every job with the spirit of respect, honesty, collaboration, and a willingness to make himself accessible to his colleagues and his team. He is deeply committed to supporting the workforce at the VA.

I want our veterans to know he will do two things so well: He will listen, and he will get things done for you.

One of my favorite stories about Denis involves this—listening and then getting things done. We were having a lot of trouble up in northern Minnesota with the iron ore mines closing down, as you all remember, kind of coming out of the downturn. It never really bounced back. Then we had the steel dumping going on from China and other countries, the illegal steel dumping, and that really spread through the country and led to the closure of many of our mines.

We tried to introduce legislation, and finally I asked Denis to come up to northern Minnesota, since he was from our State, as President Obama's Chief of Staff and sit down with a bunch of mayors from northern Minnesota, from Minnesota's Iron Range, with workers and with mine owners.

There was this long, long table, and nearly everyone had spoken. Near the end, a miner named Dan Hill was the last to go, and he said: Well, everything has been said, so I will just tell this story. He said that he was out of work, and he said that his son had just graduated from preschool. The teacher asked them at the graduation: What do you want to do when you grow up? The kids were saying all kinds of things—that they wanted to play basketball or they were going to fly an airplane and all kinds of cool things—and Denis's son looked at the teacher and said: I want to be a miner like my daddy.

At that moment, Dan Hill took this steelworker T-shirt that he had in his hand and he threw it across the whole long table. And I remember sitting next to Denis thinking, you were a football player; catch the T-shirt. And he caught the T-shirt.

Dan Hill said:

Mr. McDonough, make it come true. Make it come true.

Denis listened, but then he acted. He went back to Washington and he didn't just ignite a fire under the Commerce Department to get them to do even more work than they were already doing on enforcing tariffs and going after this illegal dumping and bringing things to the International Trade Commission, he also looked at other agencies, and he helped us, along with

SHERROD BROWN and so many others, to pass legislation that made a difference.

All of this happened, and Dan Hill got his job back. Then I invited Dan Hill to come to one of the last State of the Unions for President Obama, and Denis invited Dan Hill to the White House, and Dan Hill got to meet practically everyone surrounding the President.

That is Denis McDonough. He listened, but he didn't just say "Oh, I got there. I went. We will try our best"; he actually followed through the minutia of government to get things done.

I am going to end with the words of a poet whom President Biden happens to love. Given Denis's Irish roots, I can't think of a better person to quote from today, and it is Mr. Heaney, who once wrote: "Anyone with gumption and a sharp mind will take the measure of two things: what's said and what's done."

So Denis will not just say words to the veterans of this country; as your Secretary, he will get things done.

With that, I ask my colleagues to support the nomination of Denis McDonough as Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

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

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

IMPEACHMENT

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, it has been more than a month since a violent mob stormed this building and attempted to disrupt the congressional certification of Presidential electors—the vote of those electors. Rather than a peaceful transition of power, some of the mob turned their grievances into violent action. But, again, that is the problem with mobs. No matter what the intentions were of those who were simply exercising their rights to free speech and free assembly, mobs invariably degenerate into the lowest common denominator.

That element of the mob assaulted police officers, destroyed property, and trespassed in the halls of the U.S. Capitol. Some roamed these halls in search of Members of Congress against whom they actually threatened harm. And if not for the heroism of the men and women of the Capitol Police, the human cost would have likely been higher.

The criminal acts of the mob were disgraceful and indefensible. Regardless of party or politics, there should be no disagreement on that most basic point. The people making up this mob came to Washington with the idea that the results of the 2020 election were not final. President Trump fed that fantasy by repeatedly claiming the election was stolen, even after he had exhausted

all of his legal remedies in dozens and dozens of lawsuits. The President's actions were reckless. He should have known better than to stoke a flame he could not and did not control.

But the events of January 6 are only part of the story, and it is the congressional response, including impeachment, that I now want to talk about. Simply put, this snap impeachment raises serious questions about fundamental fairness, due process, or, more accurately, a lack thereof. Unlike previous impeachments, there was no formal inquiry, no investigation, no hearings, no witnesses, no cross-examination, no nothing. We know impeachment is not like a traditional judicial proceeding. It is not a court of law. But it does make common sense—and I think this was the direction we gave the House during the last impeachment trial—that it is the House's obligation to investigate, develop the evidence, and then charge, not the other way around.

Historically, this has been true for impeachment proceedings. Each time, the House has conducted a full-scale investigation before a vote on the Articles of Impeachment. As I said, that was the case last year when the House spent months deposing witnesses, holding hearings, building a case against the President before ever announcing formal charges.

But this time around, they took an entirely different approach. In attempting to justify this unprecedented departure from a fair and dignified proceeding, some of our Democratic friends claim that no evidence needs to be presented, saying that we were all witnesses to what happened on January 6 and that we can be jurors, witnesses, and, in the words of at least one Democratic Senator, victims all at the same time.

This week, President Trump's defense team will have the opportunity to present its case, and I expect the lack of due process to be a major area of focus and rightfully so.

Unfortunately, that is not the only problem with this impeachment trial. The Constitution requires the Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court to preside over the impeachment trial of a President. But since this is the trial of a former President, a private citizen, someone who no longer holds office, Chief Justice Roberts will not be presiding. As a result, the senior Senator from Vermont will now serve as both a judge and a juror, in addition to being a witness, I presume, and, in the words of another Senator, a victim.

I respect Senator LEAHY, but the fact of the matter is, he cannot be an impartial arbiter. He has a conflict of interest. Following the House's impeachment vote, Senator LEAHY called President Trump "the greatest threat to the Constitution and to American democracy in a generation." He voted to convict Donald Trump during the last impeachment trial and apparently has already decided to do it again in this trial.