seamlessly integrate their energy resources with their diplomatic and national security efforts. There is no separation between the Middle East's oil and their foreign politics. The same for Russia or Iran or Venezuela. But U.S. energy executives are not representing the U.S. Government, which means our diplomats are on their own in conducting energy policy, which means they have an enormous amount of catching up to do against these other petro powers.

But for the first time, today, the United States is not the leading country when it comes to diplomatic posts around the world. That distinction now belongs to—guess who?—China. As our adversaries try to undermine democracies and rule of law and use their energy and technology resources to win allies, we simply don't have the means to keep up, another asymmetric advantage for our competitors.

We have no dedicated anticorruption or technology or energy policy corps within our foreign service. It is not because we don't need this capacity; it is just because we can't afford it. We lament this asymmetric advantage that other countries have on nondefense capabilities, but it is just a choice. It is a choice because we pass, year after year, these massive defense bills, and then we choose not to increase the capabilities that would actually protect us: the investments in nonmilitary capabilities.

Listen, I get it. I know this bill is going to pass, but why on Earth aren't we spending more time asking the tough questions about whether the balance of our spending on national security is right-sized to the actual threats the United States and our democratic allies face?

Yes, the Ukraine war is worth fighting, and it is expensive, but does it really make sense to spend 847 times more money on conventional military tools than we spend on winning the information war? Does it really make sense to add 10 percent to the defense budget while doing nothing to increase the size of our international development bank?

Do we really think that we are adequately responding to the actual array of threats posed to this country with a spending allocation that ends up with America having 11,000 diplomats, total, and 12,000 employees of military grocery stores?

American foreign policy today suffers from a crippling lack of imagination. American leaders complain about these asymmetric threats but refuse to acknowledge that this asymmetry exists only because we choose to do this: pass an $847 billion defense budget with a 10 percent, 1-year increase and do nothing, at the same time, to build the real capacities necessary to keep up with our adversaries' investments in nonmilitary tools of influence.

We could decide—this Congress could decide—to build a massive, modern international development bank. We could decide—this Congress could decide—not to let RT dominate the international information space. We could decide—all of us, this Congress—to have enough diplomats around the world to be able to fight the fights that matter to us.

We should imagine this world in which we fight toe to toe with the Chinese and the Russians and other adversaries in the development, information, technology, energy, and diplomatic spheres. We should imagine that world and then put in place a plan to achieve it.

Asymmetry is a choice. It is a choice for our adversaries, and it is a choice for us. And it is a consequence of our entire budget—for development aid, anti-propaganda efforts, democracy promotion, human rights advancement, humanitarian assistance, and diplomacy—being about the same size as the 1-year increase in the defense budget.

And $847 billion is a lot of money to spend without a real debate on the Senate floor, without the ability to offer amendments. I think this country would be better off, I think our security would be better protected, if we just took a step back, asked some hard questions about how we allocate money within our national security budget, and took the time to have a real floor debate with real input about it all.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that all postcloture debate time on the Douglas nomination be considered expired and the vote on confirmation be at a time to be determined by the majority leader in consultation with the Republican leader.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 1285, 1286, 1287, and all nominations on the Secretary's desk in the Coast Guard and Foreign Service; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations were confirmed en bloc, as follows:

IN THE COAST GUARD

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Coast Guard to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 2121(e):

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Richard E. Batson
Capt. Michael E. Campbell
Capt. Russell E. Dash
Capt. Amy B. Grable
Capt. Matthew W. Lake
Capt. Ralph R. Little
Capt. Jeffrey K. Randall
Capt. Wilborne E. Watson

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Coast Guard to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 2121(d):

To be rear admiral

Mary M. Dean
Charles E. Fosse
Chad L. Jacoby
Carola J. List
Michael W. Raymond

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Coast Guard to the grade indicated under title 14, U.S.C., section 2121(e):

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. William G. Dwyer

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE COAST GUARD

* PN2677 COAST GUARD nominations (173) beginning WILLIAM C. ADAMS, and ending YVONNE C. YANG, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 29, 2022.

* PN2678 COAST GUARD nominations (83) beginning CRAIG H. ALLEN, JR., and ending NICHOLAS S. WORST, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of September 29, 2022.

* PN2691 COAST GUARD nominations (5) beginning BRIAN J. MAGGI, and ending LISA M. THOMPSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of October 11, 2022.

* PN2774 COAST GUARD nominations (4) beginning TROY E. FRYAR, and ending JOHN D. HUGHES, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 15, 2022.

* PN2794 COAST GUARD nominations (9) beginning AMBER S. WARD, and ending CHRISTOPHER ANDERSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 17, 2022.

IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE

PN2169 FOREIGN SERVICE nomination of Ryan Giralt Bedford, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 19, 2022.

PN2775 FOREIGN SERVICE nominations (52) beginning Gary P. Anthony, and ending Stephanie A. Bunce, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of November 15, 2022.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 1201, Shailen P. Bhatt, of Michigan, to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.