

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

NATIONAL DEFENSE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week, the Armed Services Committee voted to recommend a \$25 billion increase to topline defense spending.

In overwhelming bipartisan fashion, our colleagues rejected a fourth straight budget request from the Biden administration that failed to keep pace with inflation, much less the threat of China.

If this major investment is actually appropriated, it will be an overdue step toward equipping America's Armed Forces to meet an increasingly dangerous world.

But shortly after the committee's action, senior Senate Democrats shattered any expectation that they were ready to start taking the requirements of national defense seriously. They began with myths about the past.

The Democratic leader suggested in a statement that "Democrats have led the way in ensuring our military is the best trained and best equipped fighting force in the world."

Really? Guess again. Every year, Republicans have led efforts to secure defense spending beyond President Biden's meager requests.

When the administration initially wanted the Pentagon to pay for increasing operational costs in Europe out of hide, without backfill, it took Republicans demanding additional appropriations to buy new weapons to replace the older ones we were providing Ukraine.

For his part, our colleague from New York blocked an amendment to the infrastructure bill in 2021 that would have made an historic investment in the defense industrial base, and this was actually before the Russian escalation. And then Senate Democrats voted in lockstep to block a similar one during budget reconciliation.

All around the world, America's adversaries are offering clear and alarming reminders of how rapidly modern warfare is changing. The battlefields of Ukraine have become a laboratory for fast-evolving concepts like unmanned aerial vehicles, electronic warfare, and air defenses. Iran's war on Israel, America, and international shipping highlights the growing importance of long-range weapons and air and missile defense. And China's military modernization, from its strategic rocket force to its navy, underscores the stakes of neglecting our own defense in bold, red ink.

These threats offer us essential lessons about the deficiencies of our own

capabilities; that is, if we choose to act on them. America is literally years behind in building the sort of production capacity we need to sustain effective deterrence or win decisively if war actually comes.

The administration deserves credit for taking production of 155-millimeter artillery shells seriously, but they haven't directed the same urgency to critical air and missile defense interceptors or long-range weapons. Republicans fought to include hundreds of millions of dollars for these priorities in the supplemental, but it is long past time to put critical requirements like these in our base budget.

If the administration doesn't prioritize this procurement in its budgeting and contracting, we shouldn't be surprised when producers hesitate to invest in new production lines or new workers. We have to take the requirements of our national defense more seriously. What on Earth should the rest of the world conclude if we don't?

Next month, dozens of America's allies will arrive here in Washington for a summit of the most successful military alliance in world history. In the face of growing threats, they will have much to celebrate: the addition of two new allies in Finland and Sweden; greater cooperation with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, several of whom will be in attendance; and the more than 20 NATO member states who now meet or exceed the alliance's 2 percent spending target.

It is encouraging that so many of America's friends have taken long overdue steps toward stronger defense in response to Russia's aggression. But America cannot afford to be reactive. Threats to our interests are too great to wait for our adversaries to actually strike.

What example will we set? I know the one I would like to set. I know the message Ranking Member WICKER and the overwhelming majority of colleagues on the Armed Services Committee would like to send to the world. But it will take a great deal more seriousness from leading Senate Democrats for the promise of American strength and leadership to carry any weight. They could start by bringing the NDAA to the floor without delay.

NOMINATION OF MUSTAFA TAHER KASUBHAI

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, unfortunately, the Democratic leader has decided that instead of taking up the critical annual Defense authorization, the Senate will dedicate floor time this week to the latest in the Biden administration's parade of unfit nominations to the Federal bench.

The latest example is a judge nominated to the Federal district court in Oregon named Mustafa Kasubhai. Judge Kasubhai's record and judicial philosophy put him well outside the mainstream.

This nominee has bragged about his lack of commitment to standard juris-

prudential practices. During his time as a magistrate judge, he said we have to "set aside conventional ideas of proof"—of proof—"when we are dealing with the . . . interpersonal work of equity, diversity and inclusion."

Now, if by "conventional ideas of proof," he is referring to things like clear evidence or sworn witnesses and their testimony, then I think I tend to prefer conventional ideas.

Unfortunately, this only scratches the surface. This judge also sounds like a committed Marxist. He has authored an article promoting the integration of Marxist theory into property law and claimed that the notion of scarcity of natural resources was a myth promoted by a privileged elite.

He has heaped high praise on the disgraced racist prophet known for insisting that "the only remedy to past discrimination is present discrimination. The only remedy to present discrimination is future discrimination."

As many of our colleagues know, I was fortunate to be here in Washington when Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, and I don't recall Dr. King calling for retribution. In fact, his name has become nearly synonymous with the exact opposite.

But apparently this is just one more subject on which this judge would prefer to leave "conventional ideas" behind. Well, when it comes to judicial nominations, I subscribe to conventional wisdom: A judge's job is to follow the law, not the passing fads of woke politics.

So I urge my colleagues to join me in rejecting this nomination.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant executive clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant executive clerk read the nomination of Katherine E. Oler, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of fifteen years.