

Putin, sensing Western weakness for what it is, could be tempted to replay his Ukrainian playbook in Estonia or Latvia, forcing NATO into war or obsolescence.

China could escalate its island conflicts in the East and South China Seas. Without an adequate American response—or worse, with China denying American forces access to those seas—countries as diverse as South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines would feel compelled to conciliate or confront regional stability.

While North Korea already possesses nuclear weapons, Iran appears to be on the path to a nuclear bomb, whether it breaks or upholds a potential nuclear agreement. Not only might Iran use its weapon, but its nuclear umbrella would also embolden its drive for regional hegemony. Moreover, Iran could provide its terrorist proxies with nuclear materials.

And does anyone doubt that Saudi Arabia and other Sunni states will follow Iran down this path? Nuclear tripwires may soon ring the world's most volatile region, increasing the risk of nuclear war, as well as the possibility that Islamist insurgents might seize nuclear materials if they can topple the right government.

Islamic terrorists, meanwhile, will continue to rampage throughout Syria and Iraq, aspiring always for more attacks in Europe and on American soil. Emboldened by America's retreat and by their own battlefield successes, they will continue to attract thousands of hateful fighters from around the world, all eager for the chance to kill Americans.

All these are nightmare scenarios, but sadly not unrealistic ones. The alternative, however, is not war. No leader—whether a President, a general or platoon leader—wishes to put his troops in harm's way. War is an awful thing, and it takes an unimaginable toll on the men and women who fight it and their families.

But the best way to avoid war is to be willing and prepared to fight a war in the first place. That is the alternative: military strength and moral confidence in the defense of America's national security. Our enemies and allies alike must know that aggressors will pay an unspeakable price for challenging the United States.

The best way to impose that price is global military dominance. When it comes to war, narrow margins are not enough, for they are nothing more than an invitation to war. We must have such hegemonic strength that no sane adversary would ever imagine challenging the United States. "Good enough" is not and will never be good enough.

We can look to a very recent historic example to prove this point. Just 25 years ago, a dominant American military ended the Cold War without firing a shot. If we return to the dominance of that era, aggressive despots such as Vladimir Putin, rising powers such as

China, and state sponsors of terrorism such as Iran's Ayatollahs will think long and hard before crossing us. And while we may not deter terrorist groups such as the Islamic State, Al Qaeda, and Hezbollah, we will kill their adherents more effectively, while also sending a needed lesson to their sympathizers: Join and you too will die.

Bringing about this future by being prepared for war will no doubt take a lot of money. But what could be a higher priority than a safe and prosperous America, leading a stable and orderly world? What better use of precious taxpayer dollars? What more lessons from history do we need?

I began with Churchill's prescient words from 1933. Alas, the West did not take his advice, did not rearm and prepare to deter Nazi Germany. The predictable result was the German remilitarization of the Rhineland and the long march to war. Now let me close with his regretful words from 1936:

The era of procrastination, of half-measures, of soothing and baffling expedients, of delays, is coming to its close. In its place we are entering a period of consequences.

Churchill later called World War II the unnecessary war because it could have been stopped so easily with Western strength and confidence in the 1930s. I know many of you in this Chamber stand with me, and I humbly urge you all—Democrat and Republican alike—to join in rebuilding our common defense, so that we will not face our own unnecessary war, our own period of consequences.

I will now yield the floor, but I will never yield in the defense of America's national security on any front or at any time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

---

#### CONGRATULATING SENATOR COTTON

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, we just had an opportunity to hear from our new colleague from Arkansas, who has laid out the national security requirements of our country quite effectively. As someone who has served in the military himself in recent conflicts, he speaks with extra authority. I want to congratulate the junior Senator from Arkansas for an extraordinary initial speech and look forward to his leadership on all of these issues in the coming years.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, time is running out for us to extend the Children's Health Insurance Program, a program that began almost 20 years ago in this body and the other body and that right now is taking care of 10 million children—the children of parents who in most cases have full-time jobs that don't offer insurance and full-time jobs that don't pay enough so these families can buy insurance for their children.

We know that CHIP works. It works for parents, and it works for children. We know that if we don't act now, States will start rolling back the CHIP programs. Legislatures are adjourning almost as we speak. We need to provide States with certainty so they can budget for CHIP now and 4 years into the future.

Unfortunately, the deal currently being floated in the House would not fund CHIP for a full 4 years. Instead, if reports are true, it would permanently repeal the sustainable growth rate—the so-called doctors fix—while failing to provide much needed certainty to children's health care. I want to take care of doctors. I want to make sure this is done right because it affects doctors. It affects doctors' ability to deliver care. It affects those patients whom doctors serve. But how do we leave here taking care of the doctors permanently and shortchanging children, only giving them 2 years of health insurance? It is past time we fix SGR.

In 2001, when I was a member of the House, Congressman BILIRAKIS as the Republican chair of the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee and I as the Democratic ranking member wrote the first SGR fix, so I have been fixing the SGR for a long time. But we shouldn't be focused in this body and that body on paying doctors at the cost of shortchanging our children. Our priority must be passing a full 4-year, clean extension of the current CHIP program, on which 130,000 children in my State depend—again, sons and daughters of working Oklahoma families and working Ohio families who are working in jobs where they simply don't get insurance and don't get paid enough that they can buy insurance. These 10 million children in our Nation depend on this.

A 4-year extension of CHIP will provide Congress, the administration, and our States with the necessary time to collect relevant data and information to fully analyze and prepare for the future of kids covered. Doing only 2 years is not just shortchanging these children and creating anxiety in their families, it is also truncating our ability, compromising our ability to really understand how to fully integrate CHIP into a health care system overall in the future. We should be providing certainty and stability for these families, not the cliché of kicking the can down the road in favor of a short-term fix. A