

ethos as we continue to reinvigorate the debate and amendment process.

In the weeks and months ahead, new disagreements will surely arise. This is when civility and statesmanship are most needed. We must each overcome whatever instincts may drive us away from civil discourse and toward anger, bitterness, petulance, or self-promotion.

When this new Congress convened just over six weeks ago, I spoke of our collective duty to restore the Senate. I expressed my confidence that we could make the Senate work again by returning to regular order, promoting robust debate, and enabling an inclusive amendment process. We have made admirable progress over the last month. Our actions are backing up our rhetoric. Let us sustain this momentum.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, this afternoon the Senate voted to approve Dr. Carter's nomination as the next Secretary of Defense. I supported his nomination and appreciated the candor he displayed during both his confirmation hearing and in our private meeting.

I believe the many challenges facing our Nation require a fresh perspective and a strong analytical mind. I am confident Dr. Carter possesses both. Despite the fact the international landscape has changed dramatically over the past few years, the Obama administration has failed to modify its policies to meet the new challenges facing our Nation. In fact, top administration officials have emphasized in recent interviews their approach is not changing and instead offer Americans a laundry list of things they will continue to do. This is unacceptable.

I am very concerned this administration actually believes the correct course of action is to continue what we have been doing. In the Senate, the Armed Services Committee has held a number of hearings to examine the effectiveness of the current U.S. national security strategy.

Witnesses from across the political spectrum have merged on one point. In several key areas, U.S. national security strategy and our regional goals are either ambiguous or divorced from events on the ground. What is needed is a reevaluation, not a continuation.

In Syria, for example, President Obama called on Bashar al-Assad to step down 3 years ago. However, the President has failed to lay out a strat-

egy to accomplish his stated goal. After hundreds of thousands of Syrians have died, terrorist groups have seized control of about half of that country. Further, thanks to assistance provided by Iran and Russia, Assad has fortified his control over much of western Syria.

In response to all of this, President Obama has continued to call for a negotiated transfer of power without any articulation of how this would be accomplished. The President's goal was probably unlikely when it was first conceived, but now it is thoroughly unimaginable.

The Obama administration has also stated the United States intends to degrade and destroy ISIL. While I support this goal, I am concerned we have yet again failed to lay out a strategy to accomplish it.

Yesterday President Obama sent to Congress his authorization of military force. The decision to send young men and women to war is the most serious decision that elected officials will make. This deserves a serious, open, transparent debate that is worthy of the American people. I look forward to a robust committee process on this issue.

I am also eager to hear more from the President about the exact contours of his strategy, particularly when it comes to achieving very clear goals. What exactly do we hope to achieve? Simply stating our objective is to destroy ISIL doesn't reflect the complexities of actually realizing this goal.

The President has waged a campaign of airstrikes against this barbaric terrorist group, but we know airpower alone will not be sufficient to destroy ISIL. While the White House has proposed arming and training Syrian opposition fighters, this effort will take years to produce a force that is strong enough to dislodge ISIL from its strongholds in eastern Syria. What is more, it is unclear how the Syrian fighters—any of whom view Assad as the primary target—will be convinced to first fight ISIL. Questions about the extent to which the United States will provide opposition forces direct air support if they are attacked by ISIL or Assad—those questions remain unanswered. For these reasons, the President has been rightly criticized for not having a clear and effective strategy.

Again, I support the goal of destroying ISIL. But this is a multilayered problem. In Iraq, the administration seems to embrace a growing Iranian role, even though this puts our goal of maintaining a unified Iraq in even greater jeopardy.

With respect to Iran itself, the administration unequivocally states it will not allow that nation to develop a nuclear capability, but we hear reports repeatedly that are suggesting the U.S. negotiators are crafting an agreement that would accept its enrichment program and leave Iran as a threshold nuclear power 1 year away from a bomb, at most.

In Ukraine, the United States imposed sanctions on Russia in March for

its intervention. Since that time, Russia has continued to pour heavy weapons and fighters into that conflict. Clearly our policy is not working. We must acknowledge that as Putin continues to build momentum on the battlefield, the incentive for him to honor his diplomatic commitments and end the conflict diminishes.

Additional measures—including defensive weapons for the Ukrainians—are necessary, and they must be implemented. The international community and most Americans are understandably confused by the stark contrast between what they see and what they hear from the White House. They hear vague assertions, but they see no strategy. They hear a goal, but they see no discussion on how to achieve it. This damages our global credibility.

In a world where we rely heavily on partner nations to be our boots on the ground, we cannot afford to have our international allies wondering if we mean what we say.

Dr. Carter will have a lot on his plate in his new role. I hope his appointment will help encourage the strategic reevaluation that is so desperately needed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOKER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

(The remarks of Mr. BOOKER pertaining to the introduction of S. 502 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. BOOKER. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I stand before this body this afternoon to encourage my colleagues—particularly my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—to take into account the need to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

The House of Representatives acted responsibly in passing legislation to keep the Department of Homeland Security funded, and they did so acting more than 1 month in advance of the scheduled expiration of the existing funding stream for the Department of Homeland Security. This was a good move. It was likewise a good move of