

If you look at the chart I just showed, in January of 2017, and then you look at December of 2017, in terms of territory held, ISIS has been routed. In the first 11 months of the Trump administration, over 15,000 square miles were liberated from ISIS control, exceeding the total area freed in the preceding 2½ years. ISIS has lost over 98 percent of the territory it once held, and it hasn't gained any back.

Just a month ago, Iraqi Prime Minister al-Abadi declared his country "fully liberated" from ISIS. In Syria, ISIS has lost control of its strongholds and now only remains in small pockets of the country.

All told, in the last year, more than 5.3 million people have been freed from the brutal grip of ISIS—more than double the previous gains. Families who have spent years fearing for their lives are seeing a chance for stability, peace, and order. If this year has shown us anything, it is that we can trust our military to do its job and deliver results.

President Trump delegated tactical authority and permitted our military to take action when action was needed, and military leaders credit this tactical authority for significant gains made on the ground.

The swift rise of ISIS was enabled, in part, by the Obama administration's shortsighted desire to withdraw from the fight against terrorism in the Middle East. The withdrawal of U.S. troops—on a timeline the Obama administration announced to our enemies—left a power vacuum in the region, and ISIS stepped in to fill the void. This is a mistake we cannot repeat.

While we have made tremendous strides against ISIS in the last year, we cannot simply take these wins and let our guard down. We know ISIS and other dark actors can operate in the shadows of the internet and social media, using their extensive networks to recruit and influence other would-be attackers in the United States and around the world.

As chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, which shares jurisdiction over some of these matters, I am committed to looking at what steps we can take to thwart terrorist recruitment and planning efforts and to keep America safe. Next week, I am holding a Commerce Committee hearing on what social media companies can do in this fight.

While we focus on combating terrorism, we cannot forget the conventional threats faced by our Nation and our allies. I mentioned gains against ISIS and Syria, but there remains the alarming challenge of growing Iranian influence there. Syria provides a convenient land bridge to connect Iran with Hezbollah in Lebanon, which is well on its way to being a proxy for the Iranian Army.

Of course, we continue to see the deadly consequences of Iran's continued smuggling of arms to Houthi

rebels. Iran is a serious threat to stability in the Middle East and to our allies there, and we need to keep that in mind as we consider the failed Iran nuclear deal and the ongoing protests in Iran.

We also have to stay focused on the threat posed by North Korea. South and North Korea reestablished communications and just met to discuss the upcoming winter Olympics in South Korea. They announced, in addition to North Korea sending a delegation to the winter games, the two countries have agreed to hold military talks, but North Korea said it will not discuss its nuclear program at this time.

I think North Korea's nuclear program has to be addressed as a condition of any lasting peace, and the United States should lead its allies in making that crystal clear. While the talks are a notable development after 2 years of no communication between the two countries, we obviously need to be wary of North Korea's motives. We will have to see what actions follow and if the talks lead to any substantive steps by North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program.

President Trump and Ambassador Haley have made it clear that North Korea must abandon its dangerous ambitions, and increased sanctions are providing additional pressure. We should make no concessions without fundamental progress. Of course, this will require cooperation from China to help exert pressure on North Korea and uphold U.N. resolutions.

China has sought to tip the regional balance in its favor by objecting to the installation of missile defense platforms that would defend the United States and our allies against North Korean missiles. Meanwhile, it has been simultaneously expanding its own military, continuing to develop islands in international waters and exercising economic coercion.

President Trump's national security strategy correctly acknowledges both China and Russia as challengers to American influence, interests, security, and prosperity.

I have spoken on the Senate floor more than once to denounce Russia's continued annexation of Crimea, its subversion of Ukrainian sovereignty, and its efforts to undermine NATO, not to mention its continued denial of attempting to meddle with our election. Both the conventional challenges that our Nation continues to face and the persistent threat of radical terrorism underscore the perennial need to ensure that our military is the best prepared and the best equipped fighting force in the world.

I have said it before, and I will say it again. If we don't get national security right, the rest of what we do here is just conversation. We have to be able to defend our country and our allies.

Yes, investing in our national security and restoring our military, especially after years of neglect, will come at a cost, but as Army Chief of Staff

GEN Mark Milley has said, "The only thing more expensive than deterrence is actually fighting a war, and the only thing more expensive than fighting a war is fighting one and losing one."

In the next few weeks, the Senate will have a chance to vote to increase funding for our troops and to take real steps to restore our military readiness. I hope my colleagues across the aisle will work with us. If there is any issue—any issue—in this Chamber that should be bipartisan, it is this one. It is not an exaggeration to say the security of our Nation, our ability to live as a free people, depends upon the strength of our military. It is time to make sure our military men and women have the resources they need to defend our Nation.

RECESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:25 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. BURR).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the distinguished Presiding Officer, the Senator from North Carolina.

I ask unanimous consent to speak for 2 minutes on the nominees on whom we are about to vote.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, on December 1, 2016, Judge Todd Campbell stepped down as a district court judge for the Middle District of Tennessee. On April 15, 2017, Judge Kevin Sharp stepped down, creating a second vacancy in the Middle District. Those two vacancies have resulted in increased caseloads for the only two remaining full-time Federal district court judges, Waverly Crenshaw and Aleta Trauger.

Things are almost as bad in Tennessee's Western District, where we have two vacancies. Fortunately, help is on the way. In July of last year, President Trump nominated Chip Campbell to serve in Tennessee's Middle District and Tommy Parker to serve in the Western District. I was pleased to see the President select such qualified individuals, and I thank him and his counsel, Don McGahn, for working with us throughout this process. I was equally pleased to see the Senate Judiciary Committee approve both nominations by voice vote last October. And it is easy to see why Tennesseans are excited about these nominees, too.

Chip Campbell is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the University of Alabama School of Law. Before attending law school, Mr. Campbell

served as a naval flight officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. He began his career in private practice with Maynard, Cooper & Gale in Birmingham, before moving and joining the Nashville firm of Riley, Warnock & Jacobson. Today he is a partner at Frost Brown Todd in Nashville, where he chairs the competition law section of the business litigation practice group.

Tommy Parker received his undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina before going to law school at Vanderbilt. Upon graduation, he joined the Memphis law firm of Waring Cox. In 1995, Mr. Parker left his position with the firm to serve as an assistant U.S. attorney for the Western District of Tennessee. Today he is a partner at Baker Donelson in Memphis.

I want to note that President Trump has also made two other nominations to fill the remaining vacancies in the Middle District—Eli Richardson—and in the Western District—State Senator Mark Norris—and I encourage the Senate to act quickly on their nominations. But today's votes are a good start.

Chip Campbell and Tommy Parker will be assets to the Federal bench, and Tennessee is fortunate to have such well-qualified nominees. These are men of good character and good temperament, and today I encourage my colleagues to support their nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PORTMAN). Under the previous order, all postcloture time is considered expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Campbell nomination?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 3 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Alexander	Cochran	Flake
Baldwin	Collins	Gardner
Barrasso	Coons	Gillibrand
Bennet	Corker	Graham
Blumenthal	Cornyn	Grassley
Blunt	Cortez Masto	Harris
Booker	Cotton	Hassan
Boozman	Crapo	Hatch
Brown	Daines	Heinrich
Burr	Donnelly	Heitkamp
Cantwell	Duckworth	Heller
Capito	Durbin	Hirono
Cardin	Enzi	Hoeven
Carper	Ernst	Inhofe
Casey	Feinstein	Johnson
Cassidy	Fischer	Jones

Kaine	Nelson	Smith
Kennedy	Paul	Stabenow
King	Perdue	Sullivan
Klobuchar	Peters	Tester
Lankford	Portman	Thune
Leahy	Reed	Tillis
Lee	Risch	Toomey
Manchin	Roberts	Udall
Markey	Rounds	Van Hollen
McCaskill	Rubio	Warner
McConnell	Sanders	Warren
Menendez	Sasse	Whitehouse
Merkley	Schatz	Wicker
Moran	Schumer	Wyden
Murkowski	Scott	Young
Murphy	Shaheen	
Murray	Shelby	

NOT VOTING—3

Cruz Isakson McCain

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Mitch McConnell, Deb Fischer, John Barrasso, John Thune, Roger F. Wicker, James M. Inhofe, Johnny Isakson, Mike Crapo, Tom Cotton, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Mike Rounds, Michael B. Enzi, James Lankford, Lindsey Graham, Pat Roberts, Todd Young.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 96, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 4 Ex.]

YEAS—96

Alexander	Blunt	Cantwell
Baldwin	Booker	Capito
Barrasso	Boozman	Cardin
Bennet	Brown	Carper
Blumenthal	Burr	Casey

Cassidy	Heller	Reed
Cochran	Hoeven	Risch
Collins	Inhofe	Roberts
Coons	Johnson	Rounds
Corker	Jones	Rubio
Cornyn	Kaine	Sanders
Cortez Masto	Kennedy	Sasse
Cotton	King	Schatz
Crapo	Klobuchar	Schumer
Daines	Lankford	Scott
Donnelly	Leahy	Shaheen
Duckworth	Lee	Shelby
Durbin	Manchin	Smith
Enzi	Markey	Stabenow
Ernst	McCaskill	Sullivan
Feinstein	McConnell	Tester
Fischer	Menendez	Thune
Flake	Merkley	Tillis
Gardner	Moran	Toomey
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Udall
Graham	Murphy	Van Hollen
Grassley	Murray	Warner
Harris	Nelson	Warren
Hassan	Paul	Whitehouse
Hatch	Perdue	Wicker
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden
Heitkamp	Portman	Young

NAYS—1

Hirono
NOT VOTING—3

Cruz Isakson McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 96, the nays are 1. The motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Thomas Lee Robinson Parker, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS CAMPBELL

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a trio of excellent staffers, all of whom served with distinction on the Senate Finance Committee for a number of years and who recently left the committee to pursue other ventures.

First, Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about Chris Campbell, a longtime friend and trusted adviser, who until recently served as the Republican staff director on the committee. Last summer, he was nominated and confirmed to serve as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Financial Institutions.

I have known Chris for more than 17 years, and I cannot overstate his importance and contributions to my years of work here in the Senate. Chris joined my campaign for President back in 2000, where I immediately recognized his talent and leadership abilities and appointed him to be my national field director, although he was relatively young and inexperienced at the time. Needless to say, I don't blame Chris for how that particular campaign turned out. In fact, that same year, I asked him to serve as director for my Senate reelection campaign, which thankfully met with much better results. After that, he came to Washington to serve on my staff on the Senate Judiciary Committee.