Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to address the Senate on the pending nominations before the Senate.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF NOAH BRYSON MAMET TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC

NOMINATION OF COLLEEN BRADLEY BELL TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO HUNGARY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Noah Bryson Mamet, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Argentine Republic; and Colleen Bradley Bell, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Hungary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

BELL NOMINATION

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I don't usually object to the appointments and nominations by the administration to various ambassadorial positions around the world. I also understand there are numbers of political supporters, financial supporters, and that this is characteristic of Republican and Democratic administrations alike. It has never disturbed me when I have observed nominees to a Caribbean country or maybe to London or Paris or Berlin being rewarded for support both financial and otherwise. But now we are at a point where, according to the Washington Post, modern Presidents have generally followed a 70–30 rule on ambassadorial appointments—where 70 percent are career foreign service and 30 percent are political appointees. President Obama has defied this historic bipartisan political practice, and in his second term a shocking 53 percent of ambassadorial nominees have been political. This brings his 2-term average to 37—far more than any administration in the past. What is very interesting is that some of these nominees are in very sensitive positions around the world. The nomination of Ms. Colleen Bell is probably the most egregious example of that.

Hungary is a close ally—in many respects—but there is no doubt that since taking office in 2010 the Hungarian Prime Minister, Mr. Viktor Orban, has centralized power, has faced scrutiny due to actions that critics charge are inconsistent with democratic principles and practices. His government has reduced the independence of Hungary's courts, pushed through controversial changes to the constitution, and placed acute restrictions on nongovernmental organizations. In other words, this is a very important country. This is a very important country where bad things are going on.

Ms. Bell's experiences have been largely relegated to producing the television soap opera ''The Bold and the Beautiful.'' Now, I am sure television viewing is important in Hungary, but the fact is this nominee is totally unqualified for this position in this country.

Now, if it were, as I say, some Caribbean country or some other, I would understand that. But here we are in a relationship with a country where, according to Bloomberg News, ''Orban says he seeks to end liberal democracy in Hungary. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said he wants to abandon liberal democracy in favor of an 'illiberal state,' citing Russia and Turkey as examples.''

By the way, we have an excellent DCM there in Hungary who has been doing a great job.

Ms. Bell has two qualifications. One is she is a producer of a television soap opera. She has no experience in foreign policy or national security, no familiarity with the language, country, or the region, has never been there, and lacks meaningful knowledge of history or economics. Her only significant qualification is that she bundled, as the word is used, $800,000 to President Obama in the last election, and as part of the California delegation to the 2012 Democratic convention, she bundled more than $2.1 million for President Obama's reelection effort.

I want to repeat again that I understand there are awards for political support and it has grown with ''bundling.'' But when we send a person who doesn't know the language—has never been to the country, has no familiarity in foreign policy or national security—to a nation of this importance, then, my friends, we are making a serious mistake.

The Hungarian Prime Minister is distancing himself from the values shared by most European Union nations. Orban said civil society organizers receiving funding from abroad needed to be ''monitored,'' as he considered those to be agents of foreign powers. We are talking about the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, Freedom House, and others.

He said:

> We're not dealing with civil society members but paid political activists who are trying to help foreign interests here.

Amazing. Orban, who has fueled employment with public works projects, said he wants to replace welfare societies with a workfare state. But the main problem is that Mr. Orban is cozying up to Vladimir Putin. He has now entered into a nuclear deal, and he is practicing the same kinds of anti-democratic practices as what seems to be his role model—Vladimir Putin.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter to Mr. REID from the 15 former presidents of the American Foreign Service Association be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

MARCH 6, 2014.

DEAR SENATOR REID, Among the nominees for ambassadorships currently under consideration by the Senate, three have generated considerable public controversy: George Tsunis (Norway), Colleen Bell (Hungary), and Noah Mamet (Argentina). The nominations of Mr. Tsunis and Ms. Bell have been forwarded to the full Senate by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

As former presidents of the American Foreign Service Association, the professional association and trade union of career members of the Foreign Service, we urge you to oppose granting Senate consent to these three candidates. Although we have no reason to doubt that the nominees are conscientious and worthy Americans, the fact that they appear to have been chosen on the basis of their service in raising money for electoral campaigns, with minimal demonstrated qualifications for their posts, has subjected them to widespread public ridicule, not only in the U.S. but also abroad. As a result, their effectiveness as U.S. representatives in their host countries would be severely impaired from the start. Their nominations also convey a disrespectful message, that relations with the host country are not significant enough to demand a chief of mission with relevant expertise.

These three nominations represent a continuation of an increasingly unsavory and unwise practice by both parties. In the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, ''The spoils or patronage theory is that public office is primarily designed for partisan plunder.'' Sadly it has persisted, even after President Nixon's acknowledged rewarding of ambassadorial nominations to major campaign donors was exposed. Recognizing that the practice was inconsistent with democratic principles, the U.S. Congress in the Foreign Service Act of 1980 set the following guidelines:

SEC. 304. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEFS OF MISSION.—

(a)(1)An individual appointed or assigned to be a chief of mission should possess clearly demonstrated competence to perform the duties of a chief of mission, including, to the maximum extent practicable, a useful knowledge of the principal language or dialect of the country in which the individual is to serve, and knowledge and understanding of the history, the culture, the economic and political institutions, and the interests of that country and its people.

(2) Given the qualifications specified in paragraph (1), positions as chief of mission should normally be accorded to career members of the Service, though circumstances will warrant appointments from time to time of qualified individuals who are not career members of the Service.

(3) Contributions to political campaigns should not be a factor in the appointment of an individual as a chief of mission.

(4) The President shall provide the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, with each nomination for an appointment as a chief of mission, a report on the demonstrated competence of that nominee to perform the duties of the position in which he or she is to serve.

(b)(1) In order to assist the President in selecting qualified candidates for appointment or assignment as chiefs of mission, the Secretary of State shall from time to time furnish the President with the names of career members of the Service who are qualified to serve as chiefs of mission, together with pertinent information about such members.

(2) Each individual nominated by the President to be a chief of mission, ambassador at large, or minister shall, at the time of nomination, file with the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives a report of contributions made by such individual and by members of his or her immediate family during the period beginning on the first day of the fourth calendar year preceding the calendar year of the nomination and ending on the date of the nomination. The report shall be verified by the oath of the nominee, taken before any individual authorized to administer oaths. The chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate shall have each such report printed in the Congressional Record. As used in this paragraph, the term ''contribution'' has the same meaning given such term by section 301(8) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 (2 U.S.C. 431(8)), and the term ''immediate family'' means the spouse of the nominee, and any child, parent, grandparent, brother, or sister of the nominee and the spouses of any of them.

During his 2008 election campaign, President Obama recognized the appropriateness of these guidelines, and promised to respect them. The time for the Senate to begin enforcing its own guidelines set forth in law for U.S. diplomatic chiefs of mission is now. The nation cannot afford otherwise.

Sincerely,

Fifteen former presidents of the American Foreign Service Association—Marshall Adair, Thomas Boyatt, Kenneth Bleakley, Theodore Eliot, Franklyn A Harris, William Harrop, Dennis Hays, J. Anthony Holmes, Lars Hydle, Susan Johnson, Alphonse La Porta, John Limbert, John Naland, Lannon Walker, Theodore Wilkinson.

Mr. MCCAIN. They say:

As former presidents of the American Foreign Service Association, the professional association and trade union career members of the Foreign Service, we urge you to oppose granting Senate consent to these three candidates . . .

They mention George Tsunis to Norway, Colleen Bell to Hungary, and Noah Mamet to Argentina. I think we should pay attention to these former distinguished members of the diplomatic corps.

I urge my colleagues for once to vote against a totally unsuitable nominee to be Ambassador to a very critical country in a struggle that is going to go on for a long time, as Colonel Vladimir Putin tries to extend the reach of Russia and restore the old Russian Empire. We will be sending a message by this appointment that it really isn't that important. I urge my colleagues to cast a ''no'' vote.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The question is, will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Noah Bryson Mamet, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Argentine Republic?

Mr. MCCAIN. 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 legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

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

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 293 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Harkin	Pryor
Begich	Heitkamp	Reed
Bennet	Hirono	Reid
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Sanders
Booker	Kaine	Schatz
Boxer	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Leahy	Shaheen
Cardin	Levin	Stabenow
Carper	Manchin	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall (CO)
Coons	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Menendez	Walsh
Durbin	Merkley	Warner
Feinstein	Mikulski	Warren
Franken	Murphy	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murray	Wyden
Hagan	Nelson	

NAYS—43

Alexander	Flake	McConnell
Ayotte	Graham	Moran
Barrasso	Grassley	Paul
Blunt	Hatch	Portman
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Burr	Heller	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeven	Scott
Coats	Inhofe	Sessions
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johanns	Thune
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Crapo	King	Vitter
Cruz	Kirk	Wicker
Enzi	Lee	
Fischer	McCain	

NOT VOTING—7

Brown	Landrieu	Rockefeller
Coburn	Murkowski	
Cochran	Roberts	

The nomination was confirmed.

BELL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to the vote on the Bell nomination.

Who yields time?

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. We are about to vote on a totally unqualified individual to be Ambassador to a nation which is very important to our national security interests. Her qualifications are as the producer of the television soap opera ''The Bold and the Beautiful.'' She contributed $800,000 to Obama in the last election and bundled more than $2.1 million for President Obama's reelection effort.

I am not against political appointees. I understand how the game is played, but here we are, a nation that is on the verge of ceding its sovereignty to a neofacist dictator—getting in bed with Vladimir Putin—and we are going to send the producer of ''The Bold and the Beautiful'' as our Ambassador.

I urge my colleagues to put a stop to this foolishness. I urge a ''no'' vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, one would think this is the first time any President ever nominated someone who is a political appointee. That is ridiculous. Just because somebody is a producer of a very popular show doesn't disqualify them. It is ridiculous. I could point out people who had the support of the Senator from Arizona who perhaps didn't work at all.

So let's be clear. This nominee is an intelligent woman. She knows how to be successful. She will do a good job. I think she will do very well in this position because I know her well. She knows how to make friends. She is not angry.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Colleen Bradley Bell to be Ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Hungary?

Mr. BARRASSO. 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 assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

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