We have heard literally not a word from the White House about this, not a single word from the President about this. I suppose this should come as no surprise. After all, this is the same President who, to this day, refuses to acknowledge that the Russians interfered in our 2016 election even though our intelligence agencies unanimously agree that Russia meddled.

This is the same President who went to Helsinki and, on foreign soil, sided with Russian President Vladimir Putin, a former KGB officer, over the CIA, the FBI, the NSA, and all of our other intelligence organizations.

The same President who spends the lion's share of almost every day criticizing everyone from the National Football League to Greta Thunberg, who is 17 years old, to the Secretary of State in Georgia for upholding the rule of law can't bring himself to utter one word of criticism for Vladimir Putin—the same President who, instead of challenging Putin, proposed creating a joint cyber unit between the United States and Russia. That would be like asking a burglar to design the locks on the front door of your house.

The Trump administration is not known for its consistency, but here is the one place they have been resolute and consistently weak, coddling dictators and abandoning our democratic allies.

As a member of the Intelligence Committee, I can't say for sure today whether this weakness emboldened or enabled our adversaries. We are going to have to study the facts. But the administration's abject fecklessness certainly hasn't helped.

To understand how weak the Trump administration has left us, it is important to appreciate the wreckage of their total war on the Federal Government. They came into office with a promise to dismantle ''the administrative state,'' but what they ended up doing was dismantling our national defenses.

Over the past 4 years, the administration drove thousands of qualified public servants to the exit, including cyber security experts in agency after agency critical to our national security.

Back in March, I asked the Department of Homeland Security to detail its plans to shore up our cyber security. They responded by telling me that they still had hundreds of vacancies for cyber security.

President Trump eliminated the top coordinator for cyber security at the National Security Council. There is no one, therefore, coordinating our cyber defenses across the Federal Government or engaging the private sector to make sure we are working together to shore up those vulnerabilities.

If you put it all together, we have been left with a gutted bureaucracy without the necessary leadership to respond to cyber threats and espionage in a coherent way. And a few weeks ago, the President fired Chris Krebs, just to make matters worse, our top Department of Homeland Security official for domestic cyber security—the very person who would be leading our response to the hacks right now.

But he is gone. He is gone not because he did a bad job but because he refused to repeat the President's baseless claims about fraud in the election, claims the President is still making as we meet here tonight more than 6 weeks after the election and 4 days after the electoral college confirmed Joe Biden's election.

In the last few days alone, the President has tweeted at least 25 times about fraud in the 2020 election, something he has completely invented in his mind, but he hasn't said one word about the most far-reaching breach of cyber security in our history by a foreign adversary.

As we meet here again tonight in the land of flickering lights, uncertain whether we will pass a budget to keep the lights on in our exercise of self-government for the weekend, all across the globe there are public servants, the men and women of our intelligence services, who are working to repair the damage that has been done and to keep us safe. They deserve and the American people deserve a President who makes clear that we won't tolerate intrusions like this, a President who rallies our allies to our common cause.

If we have learned anything this year, it is that our government has proven itself woefully unprepared to deal with emerging threats, not only a cyber attack but also a global pandemic. This year has also taught us that the cost of ignoring these threats is much, much greater than the cost of addressing them head-on.

But to do that we need a President who doesn't bury his head in the sand or his face in Twitter, a democracy that can think beyond the next commercial break on cable news, that can put aside festering partisanship and forge an enduring national security policy for the 21st century.

And Russia is not our only concern. I can assure you that China is not chasing the latest controversy on Twitter or cable news. They are building roads and bridges and airports across the globe. They are laying fiber-optic cables beneath the ocean. They are competing with us in space. They are forging new alliances and pioneering new technologies every month. They are making considered choices to shape the 21st century while we are struggling here to keep the lights on.

This lack of concern from the White House about this breach is a dark moment, but soon we will have the chance to take another approach. I hope everyone in this Chamber will seize the opportunity to work with one another to secure the promise of our great country for the next generation and America's role in the world.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion with respect to Calendar No. 836 be withdrawn and the Senate proceed to the consideration of the nomination.

PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The cloture motion was withdrawn.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Charles A. Stones, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation.

Mr. ROBERTS. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be made and laid upon the table; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

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

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MCCONNELL. I think that all of our colleagues understand our present situation.

Both sides of the aisle are firmly committed to finalizing another major pandemic rescue package for the American people. Constant discussions have been underway for several days now.

As of right now, we have not yet reached a final agreement, regretfully. I believe all sides feel we are making good progress on a major relief bill that would travel with a full-year appropriations measure.

But, alas, we are not there yet.

Given that, our urgent task is to pass a stopgap government funding measure. There is no reason the Federal Government funding should lapse while we hammer out our remaining differences. We are going to take up the continuing resolution, which just passed the House a few minutes ago on an overwhelming bipartisan basis.

I hope this body will pass it easily and get this measure on the President's desk so Congress can complete our negotiations with no pointless lapse in normal government operations.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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