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Who Owns Donald Trump? The Fiery Speech Senator Chuck Schumer Must Give To Save Our Country

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Here's the speech Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer must give to rally the country. (Because "Remember The Emoluments Clause!" isn't quite as catchy as "Remember The Maine!").



My fellow Americans, these are divisive times. Politically, the Democrats are not sure where to draw the line. Should we draw the line on Cabinet members who are woefully unqualified for their positions and dedicated to destroying the very Departments they will be heading? Should we draw the line on a Supreme Court nominee that impartial observers say would be an extremist far right pick, a person unfairly taking the seat that belongs to the moderate centrist jurist chosen by Republican leaders, praised by both parties, and nominated by President Obama in a spirit of compromise? Should we draw the line on the daily attacks by President Trump on our most basic freedoms, like freedom of the press, an independent judiciary and freedom of religion? One fact is abundantly clear and it saddens me: the Democratic Party has failed its members time and again and we must win back their support.

Republicans are equally uncertain, realizing the wisdom of that old saying, "Be careful what you wish for." Despite losing the popular vote time and again, they have gained unchecked power at the federal level. Yet now, when they put into motion their long cherished dream of dismantling the social safety net, of gutting Medicare and Medicaid, of slashing and burning the Affordable Care Act and the desperately needed protections it provides, they find themselves facing a groundswell of opposition not just from Democrats and

independents but even their own Republican voters. One fact is abundantly clear: their standard bearers were crushed in the primaries because they too have failed their members time and again and must win back their support.

Those passionate cries from the heart of their constituents haven't stopped the Republicans from gutting regulations so corporations can dump more pollution into our rivers and streams, dismantling the sober and reasonable oversight on Wall Street put in place to prevent another disastrous Recession and gleefully preparing to give the wealthy one percent like President Trump the one thing they *don't* need: a big fat tax cut so their mountains of cash can grow even bigger.

Americans are losing or have lost confidence in both major parties. And we face what is quickly becoming a Constitutional crisis. Ironically, we face an *even greater* crisis, a crisis beyond our borders. And in that lies our hope. For in a time of crisis, both parties can come together, the American people will rally, we can all rise to the challenge and answer the call of our better angels. That crisis is clear and sobering: Russia has attacked the United States.

A foreign power attacked our country. Russia did so to disrupt and sow chaos during our most vulnerable moment: the election of a new President. And they succeeded. We all agree on this. Russia attacked the United States. Democrats agree on this. Republicans agree on this. Our intelligence community agrees on this. Our allies around the world agree on this. Even President Trump agrees: we were attacked by Russia.

We cannot continue with business as usual, however disruptive and surreal even business as usual has proven in the past few days. There's a reason we feel destabilized and uncertain. There's a reason the American people are anxious and concerned. There's a reason citizens are calling and emailing their representatives in greater numbers than ever before in history, flooding town hall meetings and striving for their voices to be heard. Yes, a President who lost the popular vote is pushing through extremist measures that often even the voters in his own party don't support.

But that's not the only reason. We have been attacked by Russia and we're not fighting back. We must set aside partisan politics and focus like a laser on the imminent threat our country faces, a threat so dire it colors and distorts every decision we try to make, from Cabinet positions to Wall Street regulation to the sanctity of our very form of government, a form of government that includes freedom of the press and an independent judiciary, of which I'm afraid to say President Trump demonstrates little understanding and even less respect.

Our country has been attacked by Russia and we must respond.

First, we must fully investigate those attacks and prepare an appropriate response. It must be a smart and rational response but our action should have the urgency of the crisis we are facing. This investigation includes the ongoing look at the close ties between top associates of President Trump and Russia. Those investigations have been ongoing since last spring, though that information was not shared with the American people. I repeat: Russia attacked the United States and there is evidence of close ties between top associates

of President Trump and Russia that is disturbing enough to launch inquiries by our intelligence community. To give just one example, the CIA is investigating whether Trump's campaign received funds from Russian oligarchs and/or the Russian government. They are doing so via a counter-intelligence task force that includes the FBI, the Treasury and Justice Departments, the Office of the Director Of National Intelligence and the National Security Agency.

Clearly, the White House cannot investigate itself and those investigations must report directly to Congress. They cannot be delayed or derailed by President Trump in any way.

Second, Congress must immediately launch a full and thorough accounting of President Trump's financial holdings. During the campaign, his business empire was a matter of debate involving personal ethics and integrity. Now, it is a pressing issue of national security. We cannot have a President who is financially beholden to *any* foreign power. It would be unacceptable for President Trump to have financial ties to our neighbor to the north, Canada or our ally Great Britain or France or Germany or Japan or Australia. It is outrageous that we apparently have a President with financial ties to Russia, a foreign power that opposes our country and everything we stand for. It is a threat to our sovereign status that our President is financially chained to a country that has just attacked us.

I hope and pray that President Trump's empire isn't beholden for even a ruble to the Russian government or the Russian oligarchs who do the bidding of that country's brutal dictator, Vladimir Putin. But I must take President Trump's own children at their word when they said that most of his money in recent years has come from Russia. Congress must know precisely what his business holdings are and who controls the purse strings. We must know the answer to one vital question: who owns Donald Trump?

Third, we must then dismantle and sell off those business holdings. Happily, President Trump will enjoy a big tax break for doing so, which is something he's very familiar with. In fact, tax experts suggest President Trump may make off handsomely on the deal. Then those holdings will be placed in a genuine blind trust controlled not by his family, not by his friends and not by his business associates, but by an independent third party of trusted business sense. I recommend Warren Buffett. But whomever controls that blind trust, they cannot and will not be chosen by the President. Again, this is not payback. I would love to hear anyone defend the idea that the President of the United States can and should be under the financial thumb of a country that has just attacked us.

As a bonus, President Trump will thus be following in the footsteps of every other President in the modern era and ending his defiance of the Constitution and its emoluments clause. For those unfamiliar with it, that is the clause that says you can't pimp out the Presidency; you shouldn't profit during your time in office. But ethics and personal integrity aside, we cannot have a President whose business empire is financially controlled in any way by foreign businessmen or a foreign power. And in Russia, those two are one and the same.

In the modern era, every President has shared their tax returns, dissolved their business holdings and placed them in a genuine blind trust for all those reasons and more. It was a question of honor; you did it because it

was expected of you, the law demanded the same of your Cabinet members and because it is implicitly required by the Constitution. Clearly, that is not enough anymore.

I will sponsor legislation that ensures every President and Vice President in the future abides by the standards every President of the modern era has willingly embraced and which President Trump has ignored. Anyone placing their name on any ballot in any state for President or Vice President will have their tax returns from the last 20 years shared publicly by the IRS. Anyone holding the office of President or Vice President will dissolve all their business and financial holdings and have them held in a blind trust overseen by an independent adviser selected by the Senate. These requirements - willingly met by every other President of the modern era — are not a burden. They are an honor.

In the flurry of random and poorly thought out proposals and angry late night tweets, we seem to be forgetting that our country has been attacked by Russia. Disturbingly, President Trump himself publicly encouraged Russia to attack us. They did so precisely in the way he called for. President Trump has repeatedly and aggressively praised the brutal dictator Vladimir Putin, sometimes in the same breath denigrating the United States. He did so again in a taped interview airing right before the Super Bowl. He suggests the United States is just as bad as Russia. He is wrong. America is greater. Democracy is greater. And the rule of law is greater.

We must prove that now by fighting back. Congress must have direct control over these issues of national security. Congress must receive a full accounting of President Trump's financial holdings and share them with the American people, especially as it concerns financial ties to the Russian government and its businessmen, which are one and the same. Congress must dissolve his holdings so that President Trump is not bound by chains of gold to any foreign power in any way and certainly not a country that has just attacked us. Congress must bring to light any ties between President Trump's associates and Russia, both its government and its oligarchs.

Until these vital steps towards defending our country are in full motion, we cannot and will not continue business as usual in the Congress. I call on my Republican colleagues to join us and I believe they will because protecting our country is greater than partisan politics. We will stand together in the House and the Senate until the American people have full confidence that their government is responding to the genuine and real threat our country faces. We must be strong. We must be resolute. And we must have every assurance that our President is free to do what is best for the United States. He cannot be free if Russia controls his purse strings in any way. Do they? We don't know because President Trump has hidden those facts from the American people. That cannot stand.

Every hour of every day, we will ask the same question: who owns Donald Trump? The American people deserve to know and must know. Our nation's security depends on it. The sooner we can clear this cloud over the President's good name, the sooner we can prove our democracy is strong, the sooner we can demonstrate that no one -- not even the President — is above the law and the sooner we can make Russia pay dearly for what they have dared to do.

Our country has been attacked by Russia. We must show the urgency and passion and patriotism such attacks have always inspired in the past. We must come together, face our common foe and defend everything we hold dear. Thank you, God bless the Constitution and God bless the United States of America.

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