

sanctions on Iran in connection with the pullout of the nuclear deal, but he called them nonnuclear sanctions, hoping the next President would be caught in this sticky web. President Biden shouldn't be bound by Trump's tortured sanctions logic.

But, just as importantly, let me assure you that no matter the particulars or the details of the agreement to restart the nuclear deal, the deal critics are going to oppose it, no matter what. They opposed it in 2015. They are going to oppose it again.

What we should really be worried about is Trump's Iran policy becoming, by accident, permanent, and this is what is likely to occur if the Vienna talks fail. Iran will continue to speed up its nuclear research program, the maximum pressure will continue, and a chill will be delivered to the deescalation momentum in the region.

But on the other hand, reentering the deal, while effectively already priced into a Biden electoral victory, will be seen as a diplomatic victory, at a perfect time to score a win for diplomacy, and the Middle East countries who have found new affection for a U.S.-Iran agreement will exhale.

Now, I am not naive. I understand the Middle East has still dozens of intractable crises, and the events of the last few days in Israel and Gaza are a reminder of the grave challenges that are still there. But the overall mood of deescalation in and around the Gulf is real, and it is much better than the old incentive structure for escalation.

So I see these roots of positive change slowly, quietly growing, and, right now, the best way for the United States to nurture those grass shoots is to restart the Iran nuclear agreement. I yield the floor.

#### 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 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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 58, S. 1260, a bill to establish a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation in the National Science Foundation, to establish a regional technology hub program, to require a strategy and report on economic security, science, research, innovation, manufacturing, and job creation, to establish a critical supply chain resiliency program, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Maria Cantwell, Margaret Wood Hassan, Tina Smith, Jeanne Shaheen, John Hickenlooper, Michael F. Bennet, Patty Murray, Tammy Baldwin, Raphael G. Warnock, Christopher Murphy, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Jacky Rosen, Ben Ray Lujan, Richard J. Durbin, Tim Kaine, Jeff Merkley, Gary C. Peters, Catherine Cortez Masto.

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 motion to proceed to S. 1260, a bill to establish a new Directorate for Technology and Innovation in the National Science Foundation, to establish a regional technology hub program, to require a strategy and report on economic security, science, research, innovation, manufacturing, and job creation, to establish a critical supply chain resiliency program, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 86, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 192 Leg.]

#### YEAS—86

Baldwin	Graham	Padilla
Bennet	Grassley	Peters
Blackburn	Hagerty	Portman
Blumenthal	Hassan	Reed
Blunt	Hawley	Romney
Booker	Heinrich	Rosen
Boozman	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Braun	Hirono	Rubio
Brown	Hoeven	Sanders
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schatz
Capito	Kaine	Schumer
Cardin	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Carper	Kennedy	Shaheen
Casey	King	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lujan	Sullivan
Cornyn	Manchin	Tester
Cortez Masto	Markey	Thune
Cramer	Marshall	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Van Hollen
Daines	Menendez	Warner
Duckworth	Merkley	Warnock
Durbin	Moran	Warren
Ernst	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden
Fischer	Murray	Young
Gillibrand	Ossoff	

#### NAYS—11

Barrasso	Lee	Scott (FL)
Cotton	Lummis	Shelby
Crapo	Paul	Tuberville
Johnson	Risch	

#### NOT VOTING—3

Klobuchar	Toomey	Wicker
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The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). On this vote, the yeas are 86, the nays are 11.

Three-fifths of Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate 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.

#### EL SALVADOR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to call attention to recent events in El Salvador which have caused international concern, including in the U.S. Congress.

I was a Senator in the 1980s, when social injustices and authoritarian regimes in El Salvador led to a brutal civil war that lasted 12 years. I traveled there during that period when the United States was supporting the Salvador Armed Forces, despite their history of corruption and collusion with death squads that carried out political assassinations with impunity.

Finally, in 1992, after tens of thousands of lives lost and atrocities including the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter by the Salvadoran Army, the two sides signed the Peace Accords that ended the war. Those Accords failed to solve the country's historical problems, and the leaders of the Arena and FMLN parties failed to put implementation of the Accords above their own corrupt, political ambitions, for which they ultimately lost the support of the Salvadoran people. But the Accords did establish the foundation for democracy, including a clear separation of powers with checks and balances as well as a limited constitutional role for the armed forces and the newly formed civilian police to avoid ever again being used for political purposes or repression.

I mention this history and the price in human suffering that was paid for the chance to build a peaceful, democratic society in El Salvador, at a time when key elements of the Peace Accords are under assault from within the government itself and President Nayib Bukele.

In February 2020, in a show of force designed to intimidate the Salvadoran Congress, which at that time his party did not control, President Bukele, accompanied by heavily armed soldiers, occupied the legislative chamber to demand passage of a law to pay for new equipment. Fifteen months later, after winning a supermajority in the Congress, he turned his attention to the judicial branch.

Under the Peace Accords, the Office of the Attorney General, formerly an appendage of the Executive that was used for repression and persecution of political opponents, became an independent institution, acting as a fourth branch of government and appointed by a majority of Congress to a 3-year term. Since the Congress is also elected for 3-year terms, every Congress gets to appoint an Attorney General. The President has no say in the matter.

The Attorney General can be removed by a majority of Congress for just cause and in accordance with due process. Attorney General Raul Melara's term was to end on January 6, 2022, just 7 months from now, and the newly elected Congress could have selected someone to replace him after

that date. However, on May 1, President Bukele's supermajority in Congress summarily removed Mr. Melara without cause and appointed a political loyalist as Melara's replacement, contrary to the requirements of the Constitution and raising serious doubts about the continued independence of the office.

It is notable that prior to his dismissal, the ousted Attorney General, with U.S. support, was investigating a number of cases of corruption against top government officials, including a multibillion-dollar money laundering case. Then last week, in what can only be interpreted as a flagrant attempt to shield themselves from accountability, the Congress passed a law to provide retroactive immunity to all government officials implicated in corruption involving spending linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Also last week, the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the anti-corruption unit suddenly resigned, for reasons that have not been explained, and was also replaced by a Bukele loyalist.

Those actions were just the beginning. El Salvador's Supreme Court has 15 justices elected for 9-year terms and distributed among different chambers. Every 3 years, Congress can appoint 5 justices from a list of 30 candidates submitted by the National Council of the Judiciary. The President has no say in the matter.

Justices can be assigned to and transferred from any chamber, except justices in the Constitutional Chamber who are appointed by the Congress strictly for that chamber and cannot be transferred. The chief justice of the Supreme Court is also selected by Congress from among the five members of the Constitutional Chamber.

The newly elected Congress would have elected five justices from different chambers of the Supreme Court in June from the already submitted list of candidates. However, on May 1, the Congress removed all five justices from the Constitutional Chamber and their substitutes, without cause or due process, arguing that their rulings were biased and contrary to the government's policies. Out of those justices only one would have completed his term in June. The other four from the Constitutional Chamber were serving terms until 2029. Apparently, the role of the judiciary as a separate branch of government that serves as an independent check on Executive power in a democracy is unacceptable to President Bukele and his congressional allies.

The Congress appointed new justices but not from a list of candidates submitted by the National Council of the Judiciary. So not only was the sudden removal of justices unconstitutional; so was the appointment of new justices.

The Constitutional Chamber had played an essential, historical role as a check on the Executive's abuse of authority, which is plainly why its jus-

tices were targeted for removal. The chamber often rebuked the Executive for overreaching in its actions, including the Bukele-ordered military occupation of the Congress in February 2020. Thus, by removing the Attorney General and the Supreme Court justices, the Congress gave President Bukele control of all branches of government, creating a situation in which corruption can flourish with impunity.

I have recounted these events because they have created a crisis that could have profound consequences for El Salvador, and for U.S.-Salvadoran relations. My concern is not only what it means for democracy in that country but what it could also mean for its economy and the livelihoods of its people. The stifling of democracy ultimately deprives already desperate people—suffering from the COVID pandemic, two hurricanes in 2020, and gang violence—of any hope their lives will get better, and this desperation is a major driver of migration to the U.S. border.

The United States has always been El Salvador's largest trading partner and its largest donor. CAFTA—the Central America Free Trade Agreement—established not only trade preferences but labor, health, and environmental standards. The results have been significant.

Forty-five percent of El Salvador's exports go to the United States under CAFTA, which amounts to \$2.6 billion a year.

Thirty-five percent of its imports come from the United States, totaling \$3.5 billion a year.

There are nearly 3 million Salvadorans living in the United States, of whom 200,000 have temporary protected status. Collectively, they send \$6 billion each year in remittances to their relatives in El Salvador, which amounts to 25 percent of the country's GDP.

On top of that, the United States has provided El Salvador with more than \$700 million in aid through USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and other agencies in the last 5 years alone. Much of the progress made with those funds is now at risk of being washed away.

The largest exporters in El Salvador are U.S. corporations, which are also the largest employers in El Salvador.

President Bukele knows that his dictatorial actions are a direct challenge to the United States and to the Biden administration's emphasis on democracy, human rights, and combating corruption in the region. Faced with criticism from the White House and the U.S. Congress, he may point to China as an alternative to the United States, as if a knight in shining armor from Beijing can gallop in and solve El Salvador's problems.

But the people of El Salvador have no connection with China, and they are not about to cast aside their longstanding relationship with the United States. Trade with China has always

been one-way and characterized by dumping practices that have destroyed local industries in El Salvador. There are no major exports from El Salvador to China except occasional shipments of coffee and sugar. Chinese infrastructure projects do nothing to help unemployed Salvadorians, when China sends the steel, concrete, and even the Chinese workers to build them.

The Salvadoran private sector knows that China isn't the answer. They know the country cannot prosper without democratic institutions and the rule of law.

El Salvador is a sovereign country, and President Bukele was democratically elected. He makes his own decisions. But the choices he and his allies in the Salvadoran Congress make, that are eviscerating El Salvador's democratic civilian institutions and empowering the armed forces, have consequences for U.S.-Salvadoran relations. They have consequences for our aid programs and for our support for financing for El Salvador from the IMF, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the World Bank and for our trade relations, and for visas.

This isn't about national sovereignty and foreign interference, as President Bukele has falsely suggested. His actions directly affect the United States, U.S. companies, our commercial relations, and the welfare of millions of Salvadorans in the United States, as well as the Salvadoran population.

I join others here and in El Salvador in urging President Bukele and the Salvadoran Congress to reconsider their unconstitutional actions and to restore the separation of powers and the rule of law. Don't destroy the Peace Accords' greatest achievement. End the attacks on the rule of law, respect the tenure of other justices and the Human Rights Procurator, and appoint justices to the Constitutional Chamber and an Attorney General following the established procedures and ensuring that they are people with the necessary professional qualifications, integrity, and independence.

#### TRIBUTE TO BRIAN RIENDEAU

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, throughout a year full of new and difficult challenges, the greater Louisville region has been fortunate to have my friend Brian Riendeau helping lead the response. As the executive director of Dare to Care food bank, Brian has been instrumental in delivering tens of millions of quality and nutritious meals each year around this community. His vision and talent support families when they need it most, and we owe him a major debt of gratitude. This summer, Brian will bring to a close his 12 years of remarkable leadership at Dare to Care. I would like to take a moment today to recognize his accomplishments and thank him for his vast contributions to Kentucky.

This last year wasn't the first time I've watched Brian deliver for Kentucky. Before we worked together in