

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S. RES. 504

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, under section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, I move to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S. Res. 504.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations, S. Res. 504, a resolution requesting information on Israel's human rights practices pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the vote: Senator SANDERS for up to 25 minutes, Senator MERKLEY for up to 5 minutes, and Senator CARDIN for up to 5 minutes.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, let me apologize to my colleagues for being late. It turns out today was not a great day to travel by plane. I thank the leadership for delaying the vote as well.

We will soon be voting on a resolution requesting information on Israel's human rights practices under section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act.

There has been some confusion as to what this resolution does and does not do. I would like to say a few words about why it is critical that this resolution come to the floor, why it is imperative that this resolution be passed, imperative that we have this debate and recorded vote, and why Congress must have the information requested in this resolution.

Very sensibly, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, requires that any security assistance or military equipment provided by the United States of America to any country must be used in line with internationally recognized human rights. This is not a radical idea and something I hope that we all agree with. This act prohibits assistance to any government that engages in a consistent pattern of human rights violations.

This is U.S. law established over 50 years ago—not a new idea. The act also provides Congress with several oversight tools to ensure that this law is followed. One such tool is section 502B(c), which allows Congress to direct the State Department to provide information on the human rights

record of any country—any country—receiving U.S. military assistance.

That is what this resolution does, in line with 50-year-old existing law. It directs the State Department to provide any credible information it may have on potential violations of internationally recognized human rights by Israel in its military campaign in Gaza.

It focuses on the denial of the right to life caused by indiscriminate or disproportionate military operations as well as by restrictions on humanitarian access.

It also asks for information on steps the United States has taken to limit civilian risk in this war, a certification that the Leahy laws are being fully applied, and a summary of the arms and munitions provided to Israel since October 7.

This is a simple request for information. That is all this resolution is about. It does not alter aid to Israel in any way; it simply requests a report on how U.S. aid is being used. This is a very modest, commonsense proposal, and, frankly, it is hard for me to understand why anyone would oppose it.

So we will soon be voting on a very simple question: Do we support asking the State Department for information on whether human rights violations may have occurred using U.S. assistance in Israel's military campaign? That is it. That is what this resolution is about. It is noncontroversial, and it should be passed in large numbers. This is not the case today. We don't have the information.

The State Department will provide a report. The information requested in this resolution is straightforward to provide—not hard for the State Department—and it is critical to congressional oversight. The State Department should have it readily available, as required under current U.S. law and policy. Further, in the highly unlikely event the 30-day deadline is not met by the State Department, the law allows Congress to pass a measure continuing aid. After the report is received, Congress may then consider any changes it deems necessary for security assistance to the country in question. Any such resolution must pass both Houses of Congress and be signed by the President.

But, again, what we are voting on today is simply a request for information. Let me say a few words as to why this resolution is necessary, and these rather horrific photographs behind me I think say it all.

First, it is necessary because of the scale of the destruction in Gaza, the indiscriminate nature of the military campaign, the humanitarian catastrophe that is now occurring, and the limits on humanitarian access—food, water, medical supplies, and fuel.

Second, because of the extensive use of U.S. weapons in attacks that have killed thousands of civilians. Much of the destruction that has taken place in Gaza has been done with U.S. weapons.

Thirdly, I am concerned about the implications of some of the very ex-

treme statements and unclear intentions coming out of the Netanyahu government.

(Mr. WARNOCK assumed the Chair.)

It has been more than 100 days since this war began with the horrific Hamas terrorist attack which killed 1,200 innocent men, women, and children in Israel, and which took more than 200 hostages, over 100 of whom are still cruelly being held in captivity as of today.

While there is no question in my mind that Israel has the right to defend itself and go to war against Hamas, who started this terrible situation, Israel does not have the right to go to war against the entire Palestinian people, innocent men, women, and children in Gaza. Tragically, that is what we are seeing right now.

As we all know, the military campaign being waged by the rightwing Netanyahu government has led to massive destruction and widespread civilian harm. This has been far and away the most intensive bombing campaign of the 21st century. As President Biden has said repeatedly and the press and human rights monitors have exhaustively documented, this bombardment has been largely indiscriminate.

The results of this bombing campaign have been catastrophic, and I underline the word "catastrophic."

Since October 7, the start of the war, over 24,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bombs and over 60,000 have been injured and wounded. Seventy percent of these victims are women and children, and it is believed that thousands more victims lie under the rubble of destroyed buildings in Gaza.

Since the beginning of this war, 1.9 million Palestinian men, women, and children have been driven from their homes. That is 85 percent—85 percent of the total population of Gaza has been forced out of their homes. Where are they going? They have been driven here. They have been driven there. They do not even know today whether they are ever going to be able to return to their homes. These are impoverished people who have no idea as to what their future is or will be.

Despite the sharing of coordinates with Israeli forces, 40 United Nations facilities have sustained direct hits, 61 U.N. installations have suffered collateral damage, and 150 U.N. workers have been killed—150 U.N. workers have been killed.

United Nations reports that over 234,000 housing units have been damaged and more than 46,000 homes completely destroyed in Gaza, amounting to nearly 70 percent—70 percent—of the housing stock, a figure confirmed by academic analysis of satellite radar data. That means—and this is rather an incredible reality—that means that the destruction of Gaza after 100 days has surpassed the destruction of Dresden during World War II, where half the homes in that city were destroyed, and is beyond the damage in dozens of

other German cities subjected to years of bombing during World War II.

Today, not only are the vast majority of people in Gaza homeless, but they lack food, water, medical supplies, and fuel. A recent U.N. report indicates that half of the population of about 2.2 million people are at risk of starvation, and 90 percent say they regularly go without food for a whole day. Parents there go out of their way to make sure their kids eat first.

The chief economist at the World Food Programme said that the humanitarian disaster in Gaza was among the worst he had ever seen. Aid groups say that in the coming weeks, the entire population of Gaza could face famine.

Let us be clear. The reason as to why this resolution must be passed today is that right now, right now as we speak, hundreds of thousands of children in Gaza, innocent children, are starving right before our eyes. We cannot turn away. We must act.

Tragically, despite the efforts of the U.N. and others, despite the growing humanitarian crisis we are seeing, the situation has actually gotten worse in terms of getting aid to the people in need, to these children. Aid groups say that humanitarian access actually deteriorated in January compared to December. Trucks are crossing the border much too slowly, much too few, but even these trucks can't go beyond the immediate border area because the Netanyahu government won't let them proceed in a way that is safe.

That is the situation as it stands today. Humanitarian workers who have spent decades serving in war zones say that this catastrophe goes beyond anything they have ever seen.

Let me repeat. This is not some tragedy taking place in Asia, in Africa—God knows there are enough tragedies all over the world—but this is a tragedy in which we, the United States of America, are complicit. Much of what is happening, much of the bombardment and the other actions that we are seeing now, is happening right now with U.S. arms and equipment. In other words, whether we like it or not, the United States is complicit in the nightmare that millions of Palestinians are now experiencing.

The Wall Street Journal reported on December 1 that the United States had provided at least 15,000 bombs and 57,000 artillery shells to Israel, including more than 5,400 huge, 2,000-pound bombs that can flatten entire neighborhoods. The Washington Post reported that in just 6 weeks after October 7, Israel dropped more than 22,000 American-supplied bombs on Gaza—22,000 American-supplied bombs. CNN reported that nearly half of these bombs were unguided, so-called dumb bombs.

So that is where we find ourselves at this moment. Mr. President, 24,000 Palestinians in Gaza are dead—70 percent are women and children—and 60,000 have been wounded. Seventy percent of the housing stock has been damaged or destroyed, and almost 2 million people

are trying to survive with inadequate supplies of food, water, medicine, or fuel. And the humanitarian situation is getting worse by the minute. Hundreds of thousands of beautiful children are facing starvation.

Given the scale of the destruction and the extensive use of American arms, military equipment, in this campaign, Congress must act, and that is why we must pass this 502B resolution. We must ensure that U.S. aid is being used in accordance with international human rights and our own laws.

A vote for this resolution is simply to request more information on a tragic situation that the American people care about.

Go back home, I say to my colleagues—red State, blue State, purple State—this issue, this suffering, is on the minds of the American people.

That is all this resolution does.

Now a vote against this resolution—which I have a hard time really understanding—it says: I don't want more information. I am going to vote against this resolution. I don't want a report from the State Department. I don't want to know how U.S. military aid in Israel is being used. I don't want to know what responsibility the United States may have for this humanitarian disaster. I want to keep my head in the sand. I don't want to see what is going on.

And, frankly, no matter what your view on this terrible war may be—agree with me; you don't agree with me—we cannot bury our eyes in the sand.

The truth is that since that terrible day on October 7 when Hamas attacked Israel, the Senate has had little meaningful debate on this war, despite the horrific toll and the deep concerns of many Americans. We have passed symbolic resolutions, but we have not considered a single measure that grapples with the unprecedented destruction, the humanitarian crisis, or the use of American weapons in a military campaign that has left so many dead, wounded, and displaced.

Now, no matter what happens on this vote, I know that this will not be the end of this debate. It is just the beginning.

And, finally, I would like to say a word about this resolution's broader importance. Right now, we are focusing on Israel, as we should, given the situation in Gaza. But, in general, what this provision does is extremely sensible. It demands accountability as to how U.S. military aid is used and whether the recipients of that aid abide by international law and our own human rights standards. This is true for Israel, for Saudi Arabia, and for any country that receives U.S. military aid.

Frankly, I hope this vote is the first of many as we take a hard look at how our military aid is being used.

Therefore, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 2304 and in accordance with the provisions of section 601(b) of the International Security Assistance and Arms Export

Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations of the further consideration of S. Res. 504, a resolution requesting information on Israel's human rights practices pursuant to section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's request is already pending.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I reserve the balance of my time, and I would yield the floor to Senator MERKLEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, on October 7, Israel suffered a horrific terrorist attack by Hamas. It echoes very much the impact that we felt here in America on 9/11 when we suffered a horrific terrorist attack, and it connected our hearts to the hearts of Israelis in a powerful way. And, certainly, I completely supported and support now the cause of Israel to go after Hamas to stop this terrorist threat. I fully support the grief they feel with the hostages who remain and their desire, their goal, to get those hostages free, and I know that the United States has been working in partnership with Israel toward that objective.

Tonight, we are further into that campaign, and we have before us a request for a report from the administration through the exercise of 502B(c) on any potential violations of internationally recognized human rights that may have occurred in this conflict—a request for a report that would be due in 30 days.

And I am here tonight still supporting strongly Israel's right to go after Hamas, but also saying that we have a responsibility to ask hard questions about how a war is conducted—every war. And we weigh in on human rights all around the world.

I cochair a commission that looks into China's abuses of human rights in all kinds of dimensions, from Tibet to the slavery of the Uighur population.

So why is this request for this information important? There are three reasons. They all relate to the validity of targeting Hamas but the invalidity—potential invalidity—of a strategy that also targets the Palestinian people living in Gaza and understanding this dimension, understanding it in terms of humanitarian aid, understanding it in terms of the huge toll on civilians that the bombing has taken, understanding it in terms of the dimension of displacement, where so many—so many—have been displaced, driven toward the south, crowded into Rafah, along the border with Egypt. So I am going to shortly address—briefly address—each of those.

I was one of the first Members of this Chamber to call for an immediate cease-fire and a massive influx of humanitarian aid because of the enormous calamity that is occurring in Gaza with the strategy that Israel is using of mass bombing and artillery shells. One aspect of this is: How does

one get humanitarian aid in to assist those innocent civilians who have been so profoundly impacted?

So, earlier this month, Senator VAN HOLLEN and I went to the Rafah crossing on the border between Egypt and Gaza. We talked to the governments. We talked to the international aid workers who work through the United Nations—an alphabet soup of organizations. We talked to the seasoned, seasoned individuals who have worked in war conflict zones around this globe, and they all said that getting humanitarian aid in is extraordinarily difficult for two reasons. And the first of those reasons was that it is very hard to get preclearance for the aid.

Trucks filled with food, water, and medical supplies were lined up for miles in the desert, waiting to be granted entry into Gaza. A truckdriver can wait more than a week, even when items are preapproved, to get through the inspection.

The inspection serves the purpose of stopping dual-use items. That is legitimate. But if it takes a week when aid is desperately needed, that means people are greatly short of food, clean water, and medical supplies.

And even when inspected and precleared, they could be rejected, and when an item is rejected, the entire truck is rejected. And we saw a warehouse filled with rejected items, including things like solar-powered refrigerators for medical uses and water decontamination supplies.

And then, if trucks are cleared to get in, it is very hard for them to get in unless there is deconfliction. If there isn't deconfliction, then the drivers risk driving and dying when a bomb or artillery shell drops in their path. And, in fact, so many aid workers have been killed and truckdrivers have been killed.

We know that, before the war, 500 trucks a day were able to get into Gaza. And now, just last week, it was less than an average of 150 trucks when people are absolutely desperate.

So there is the possibility and the hope of the United States working intensely with Israel to dramatically change this situation and to get those trucks into Gaza. But there is also the value of having a report from our government, understanding to which degree they have already worked with Israel.

Mr. President, I ask to complete the balance of my remarks.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MERKLEY. Thank you.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, could we just have an estimate of how much longer the Senator is going to be?

Mr. MERKLEY. An estimate of 5 minutes.

Mr. CARDIN. I would not object to 5 minutes.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, so our government should work to solve this problem. We have been working to

solve it—so having a report announced by our government: to what degree these strategies of a dysfunctional inspection process and a dysfunctional deconfliction process are a part of a deliberate strategy to create and intensify the shortage of food and water and medical assistance.

The second concern I have is about the bombing and artillery shells which our President has described as an indiscriminate campaign of bombing. We all understand that this terrible attack from Hamas—and Hamas is the enemy. But the Palestinians who live in Gaza and are not part of Hamas, they did not attack Israel. They are not the enemy, and thus it is essential that Netanyahu's government's war strategy against Hamas actually targets Hamas and not innocent Palestinians.

It is estimated that two-thirds of the people killed—two-thirds killed—have been women and children. That is some 8,000 children and 8,000 women. It is a massive toll.

So a report under 502B(c) would be valuable in understanding this strategy. And we are closely tied to it, which is another reason we should want this information. We have supplied over 10,000 tons of military equipment since October 7. We have included 15,000 bombs and 57,000 artillery shells.

It would be useful to have our own government analyze this and understand why we are supplying the very weapons that our government has said Israel should quit using and do a more targeted campaign.

That is the goal of 502B(c): to get a report, to get answers.

My third concern is the displacement. The widespread bombing has produced some 85 percent of the people displaced in Gaza. A leaked Israeli Intelligence Ministry paper said that there are three options, and option C is the preferred option, involving an air campaign in the north, driving people to the south, hopefully displacing them into the Sinai. That has a spooky similarity to the facts on the ground.

And, of course, such a displacement strategy has been called out by some Ministers of the Israeli Government, one of them calling for exactly that strategy, saying: We want a Gazan Nakba, that people will not be able to return.

So we have a government paper. We have the testimony by Ministry officials that that was their goal.

Is that their goal? The Government of Israel has now adamantly said that is not their goal.

That is useful to have our government's best understanding because we should never be complicit in a displacement campaign, if that is, in fact, what is going on.

So, colleagues, we look at conditions around the world, and, normally, it is folks we have little relationship with—although sometimes we have a relationship with them, but it is an “on and off again,” like the situation we have with Saudi Arabia. In this situa-

tion, it is our friend and partner that we have worked so closely with, and it may feel awkward and difficult to say we need to take a close look.

But when there has been this level of casualties and we are this closely tied to it, it is the right thing to do to get the type of information that would come through this request. I encourage my colleagues to support it.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise in opposition.

Israel is a long and close ally. And it remains the only democracy in the Middle East. This resolution is a blatant effort to undermine Israel's right to self defense. Let us not forget the facts. Israel has experienced the deadliest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust and the largest hostage crisis—including Americans—since 1979.

The Obama and Biden administrations' failed policies toward the Iranian regime have allowed billions in resources to flow to Iran's terror proxies, including Hamas. We cannot ignore bad U.S. policy that helped create this mess and then sideline our support for the ally who must deal with their consequences.

Instead, this resolution doubles down on those failed policies and represents a troubling Democrat trend: chide our closest allies and fail to confront our most dangerous adversaries. Hamas and Iran are our enemies, not Israel. It is Iran that provides Hamas with weapons, training, and intelligence. It is Hamas that chose to rampage across the border, killing over 1,200 Israelis and 13 Americans. It is Hamas that kidnapped over 240 innocent people for leverage.

It is Hamas that hides its warfighting capability under hospitals, mosques, and other protected sites. And it is Hamas that uses human shields, including women and children. Where is the outrage for this behavior? I find the silence deafening.

I encourage my colleagues across the aisle to focus on Iran, Hamas, and our adversaries and oppose this misguided resolution.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. President, in the aftermath of the horrific October 7 terrorist attack, Israel not only has the right, but also a duty to its people, to defend itself and pursue the objectives of ending the military threat posed by Hamas and returning all the hostages unharmed. I support those goals and therefore do not and would not support a resolution to terminate all U.S. military assistance to Israel.

That is why I would like to begin by making clear what S. Res. 504 is not about. It is not about cutting off U.S. security assistance to Israel. Anyone who says otherwise has not read the resolution.

So what does this resolution do? The very first line of the resolution states that its purpose is “requesting information on Israel's human rights practices.” The resolution goes on to seek information on “alleged violations of internationally recognized human

rights," including violations related to Israel's military operations and the "denial of basic humanitarian needs" like food, water, medical care, fuel, and shelter.

While these are not simple questions, the resolution simply asks questions. And while I understand that some may be uncomfortable asking questions about the conduct of a close partner, we have a duty to the American taxpayers to get the facts. Israel is the largest annual recipient of U.S. security assistance, totaling more than \$39 billion over the past 10 years alone. The United States is not a bystander to this conflict, and the American people deserve honest answers about how our assistance is being used. The report should provide a full picture of what is happening, including how Hamas's despicable tactic of hiding among the civilian population impacts the prosecution of the war and any other information that the administration deems important.

As I have repeatedly said, Israel's war against Hamas is just, but it must be waged justly. President Biden, Secretary Blinken, and officials across the Biden administration have also made this point clear. For example, Secretary Blinken has repeatedly stated that the "daily toll on civilians in Gaza, particularly children, is far too high" and called upon the Netanyahu coalition to put a "clear plan in place that puts a premium on protecting civilians" and to get "more humanitarian assistance to people who so desperately need it in Gaza."

These entreaties have been rebuffed time and time again by Prime Minister Netanyahu and his ultra-extremist coalition that includes the likes of Bezalel Smotrich and Itamar Ben-Gvir. Despite statements from the Israeli Defense Forces that their operations have shifted to a more "targeted phase," there were still between 112 to 151 Palestinians reportedly killed in Gaza each day last week. This truth is only underscored by the Sunday Washington Post headline: "Despite U.S. pressure on Israel, casualty count in Gaza remains high."

The death toll has now reached over 24,000, two-thirds of them women and children, with another 60,000 wounded. Meanwhile, the humanitarian catastrophe is getting worse, not better. The Netanyahu government initially declared a full siege of Gaza and then, for months, refused to open the main Kerem Shalom crossing. It still refuses to open the northern Erez crossing to get assistance to the desperate people trapped there. Indeed, the water pipeline to northern Gaza has been shut off since October 7.

I visited the Rafah crossing about 10 days ago and witnessed the many obstacles to getting more aid to over 2 million people in desperate need. People in Gaza are on the verge of starvation, children are having limbs amputated without anesthesia, sewage is piling up in the streets, and waterborne

diseases have broken out. International NGOs who have operated in conflict zones for decades have said they have never witnessed a humanitarian disaster as terrible as Gaza.

It is painfully evident that there is a big gap between what U.S. officials have requested of the Netanyahu government and the actions taken by his coalition. This further justifies why we need answers from the administration to the fundamental questions posed by this resolution. We owe it to American taxpayers to better understand how the support we have provided is being used. Some of the very questions raised in this resolution are those we have already sought answers to. While I appreciate the dialogue we have had with members of the administration about the situation in Gaza, to date, we have received no written responses to our letters on the conflict.

If this resolution were to be adopted, the process under section 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 gives the Biden administration 30 days to answer the questions posed. That statute requires the report within 30 days and the only reason for the timetable set forth in statute is to ensure that the Senate gets those answers within a reasonable timeframe. It is simply not credible to say that the Biden administration would fail to meet that deadline and trigger a cut-off of assistance.

Concerns have been raised that, if passed, and once the administration submits the required report within 30 days, the underlying statute, 502B(c) of the Foreign Assistance Act, allows any Senator to file a subsequent resolution to cut off security assistance provided to Israel under the Foreign Assistance Act. While it is worth noting that such a resolution would not apply to air defense systems authorized under the National Defense Authorization Act, like the Iron Dome systems, I would oppose such a blanket attempt to cut off assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act.

I do believe that the United States should require all recipients of U.S. military assistance to abide by certain principles and meet certain standards. That is why Senators Kaine, Schatz, Durbin, and I, together with ten of our Senate colleagues, have proposed an amendment to President Biden's national security supplemental request that would apply equally to Ukraine, Israel, and any other recipient of such assistance and require that each recipient: No. 1, use any U.S. weapons provided with these funds in accordance with international humanitarian law; No. 2, cooperate with U.S. efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in conflict zones where U.S.-provided weapons are being used; and No. 3, submit a report to the Congress on the extent to which these standards are being met and the extent to which the recipients have adopted U.S. policies and mechanisms to reduce civilian casualties in conflict. These standards and simple accountability measures should

apply to all recipients of U.S. security assistance worldwide, and I will be pressing further on this issue when the Senate takes up President Biden's supplemental request.

For now, the business before the Senate is S. Res. 504, and I see no reason to oppose a measure requiring a report seeking facts and information. We have a duty to the American people to get answers to the questions set forth in this resolution.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, I support this resolution and appreciate the leadership of my good friend, the senior Senator from Vermont.

Section 502B of the Foreign Assistance Act is an important and long underutilized tool. It provides a practical mechanism to focus attention on serious human rights concerns around the world. These concerns should matter deeply to every Member of Congress and every American.

There are some who may not support asking the State Department to provide the information called for in this resolution. That is unfortunate. The Senate should be asking the hard questions, especially when fundamental rights and thousands of innocent lives are at stake. Though there are clauses in the resolution I believe could be more effective if drafted differently, that is the nature of the legislative process.

The people of Gaza are in the midst of a humanitarian catastrophe. The amount of death and destruction is staggering. An estimated 10,000 children have been killed and many more likely buried under rubble. The United Nations and other humanitarian relief organizations have warned of widespread starvation if the amount of food, potable water, medicines, and other necessities of life getting into Gaza is not drastically increased in the coming days.

Differences regarding this resolution and the conduct of the war aside, we have a shared responsibility to do whatever we can to save the lives of the 2 million men, women, and children who have been displaced in Gaza and are now completely dependent on international aid. That should be our immediate priority, and I look forward to working on this with other Members of Congress, the State Department, USAID, the United Nations, and other relief organizations in the coming days and weeks. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I have a great deal of respect for my two colleagues. I think every one of us is concerned about what we see in regards to the crisis in Gaza, what we see in regards to the need for humanitarian assistance for innocent Gazans being caught in this battle. But the resolution that is being presented here today is the wrong vehicle to deal with this issue.

So let me start by saying that the resolution does a lot more than requesting information. For the information from those partners that get security assistance from the United States, the State Department today must provide the information of their compliance with our laws. That report is already required for all recipients of security aid.

What this resolution requires is a report within 30 days on specific issues concerning conduct in Gaza, and it is very specific as to what the State Department must provide. I will just give you one example, and there are many, many other examples here. They have to certify that no unit of Israel security forces that received U.S. assistance since January 1, 2018, has committed any gross violation of human rights. Now they have got to do that within 30 days or aid is suspended. And once they give a report, it triggers privileged resolutions on this floor to cut off aid to Israel.

I strongly disagree with my colleagues. 502B was never intended to be used against an ally during a war. It has never been used for that purpose. That is not the right vehicle to deal with this.

Mr. President, this is the 102nd day since Hamas's brutal attack against Israel; 102 days that hostages have been held. Our thoughts and prayers are with the hostages, and we all agree that Israel has the right to defend itself.

The challenges are made much more difficult because they are going against an enemy that has sworn to destroy the nation Israel and they still believe that and they are still conducting themselves with a threat to Israel's sovereignty and safety.

Missiles are still available to be shot into Israel. They are still there in Gaza.

We know what the Houthis are doing in the Red Sea. We know what Iran is doing in Iraq. We know the problems on Israel's northern border by Hezbollah. Over 80,000 Israelis have had to evacuate their homes in northern Israel; 100,000 in the southern part. There is a war going on, and it is made much more difficult because Hamas, sworn to destroy Israel, embeds its operations within the civilian population; has a tunneling network to try to protect its military assets, making it very difficult for Israel to be able to eliminate the threat.

At the same time, we know how much military might was in Gaza on October 7. We were supposed to have had border security to make sure that didn't get into Gaza. There was supposed to be inspections. It didn't work.

I understand why the Israelis are concerned by the way in which the supplies get into Gaza, because there is a concern of ill use and supplying the terrorists in their efforts to destroy Israel. These are all very challenging issues that we have to deal with.

Now, this resolution, as I said before, is much more than requesting informa-

tion. Its passage would be a gift to Hamas, a gift to Iran. It would show a division between Israel and the United States. It is an indictment against Israel, make no mistake about it. It makes it more challenging with sensitive negotiations taking place, as we are here, on additional hostages being released. It makes it more difficult for us to deal with preventing the escalation of the conflict.

If Iran believes that the United States is not with Israel, believe me, it makes it more likely we are going to see additional attacks in that region.

The Biden administration is seeking to contain this conflict and not to see it spread and grow out of control. It is pressing for a shift to a more targeted campaign against Hamas military infrastructure and the perpetrators of the October 7 attacks. It is pressing to get more humanitarian assistance into Gaza. And, yes, we can and should continue to position toward a targeted prosecution of the war against Hamas and Gaza. But passing this resolution does not do that. In fact, I would say, it is counterproductive to it.

Make no mistake, our passing the resolution triggers this. This is not a resolution that goes to the House and is signed by the President. If we pass this, the process is triggered to cut off aid to Israel during war.

MOTION TO TABLE

For those reasons, Mr. President, I move to table the motion to discharge S. Res. 504, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President. The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The yeas and nays are ordered.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, 24,000 Palestinians are dead, 70 percent of whom are women and children, 70 percent of the housing stock has been damaged or destroyed, and almost 2 million people are trying to survive with inadequate supplies of food, water, medical supplies, or fuel. And, as we speak, hundreds of thousands of children face starvation.

The time is now for the U.S. Senate to act.

I ask for a "no" vote on the motion to table.

VOTE ON MOTION TO TABLE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The yeas and nays have previously been ordered.

The clerk will call roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Utah (Mr. ROMNEY), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. TUBERVILLE), and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) would have voted "yea," the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY) would have voted "yea," and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) would have voted "yea."

The result was announced—yeas 72, nays 11, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 8 Leg.]

YEAS—72

Baldwin	Fetterman	Murray
Bennet	Fischer	Ossoff
Blumenthal	Gillibrand	Padilla
Booker	Graham	Peters
Braun	Hassan	Reed
Britt	Hawley	Ricketts
Brown	Hickenlooper	Risch
Budd	Hoeven	Rosen
Cantwell	Johnson	Schumer
Capito	Kaine	Scott (FL)
Cardin	Kelly	Scott (SC)
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cassidy	Lankford	Smith
Collins	Lee	Stabenow
Cornyn	Lummis	Tester
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Thune
Cotton	Marshall	Tillis
Cramer	McConnell	Vance
Crapo	Menendez	Warner
Cruz	Moran	Warnock
Duckworth	Mullin	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murkowski	Wyden
Ernst	Murphy	Young

NAYS—11

Butler	Markey	Van Hollen
Heinrich	Merkley	Warren
Hirono	Paul	Welch
Lujan	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—17

Barrasso	Hagerty	Schatz
Blackburn	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Boozman	Kennedy	Sullivan
Coons	Romney	Tuberville
Daines	Rounds	Wicker
Grassley	Rubio	

The motion to table was agreed to.

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 motion to proceed to Calendar No. 243, H.R.