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## Senate

The Senate met at 12 noon and was called to order by the Honorable CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, a Senator from the State of Maryland.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, may our hearts be open to receive Your guidance. Help us to bow to Your will and live lives devoted to Your providential leading.

Bless our Senators. Let faith, hope, and love abound in their lives. Lord, use them to heal our hurting Nation and world and to be forces for harmony, goodness, and peace. May they hunger for Your wisdom and make decisions that will honor You. Open their minds, and give them a vision of the unlimited possibilities available to those who trust You as their guide.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, February 9, 2024.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, a

Senator from the State of Maryland, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

REMOVING EXTRANEOUS LOOP-HOLES INSURING EVERY VETERAN EMERGENCY ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED UPON RECONSIDERATION—Resumed

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 815, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 30, H.R. 815, to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I will be brief.

Yesterday, the Senate cleared the first major procedural hurdle to pass-

ing the national security supplemental. It was a good and very important first step. We now resume postcloture debate on the motion to proceed. If we don't reach a time agreement, we will hold the next vote on the motion to proceed at approximately 7 p.m. tonight, but I hope our Republican colleagues can work with us to reach an agreement on amendments so we can move this process along. Democrats are willing to consider reasonable and fair amendments here on the floor as we have shown on many occasions in the past 3 years. Nevertheless, the Senate will keep working on this bill until the job is done.

I yield the floor.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, when the Biden administration released its request for supplemental appropriations in October, I said the Senate would need to do its own work to meet the demonstrated needs of our national security.

The President's decisions over the past 3 years have directly contributed to the web of serious security challenges demanding the Senate's attention—from an embarrassing retreat from Afghanistan that emboldened terrorists and shredded credibility with our allies, to a halting response to Russian escalation that kept lethal capabilities off the frontlines of Ukraine's defense, to an Iran policy that tried trading deterrence for detente.

The Senate can and will continue to urge the Commander in Chief to do the right thing, but we also have a responsibility of our own to provide for the common defense and equip the next Commander in Chief with the tools to exercise American strength.

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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That responsibility is in front of us right now, and addressing national security challenges with serious legislation starts with recognizing some pretty basic realities about how the world works:

First, America has global interests and global responsibilities, and to the extent the President has neglected them, the Senate ignores them at the Nation's peril.

Second, alliances and partnerships are essential to advancing our interests. They lower the costs of keeping the peace, reduce the direct risks to America, and facilitate the commerce that drives our economy. But these alliances and partnerships rely on American leadership and American credibility.

Finally, there is a growing list of adversaries who wish us harm. There is growing evidence that they are working together, and there is no doubt that they are emboldened by American weakness.

These are not opinions. They are plainly observable facts borne out by history. Denying them does a disservice to the American people, and it is impossible to engage productively on decisions about U.S. national security without acknowledging them.

So a great number of our colleagues have worked diligently on legislation that confronts Russian aggression against the West, Iran-backed terror against Israel and U.S. forces, and the rise of an aggressive China head-on. The product before the Senate resolves the significant shortcomings of the President's request.

For example, thanks to Senate Republicans, it requires the Commander in Chief to submit a strategy that identifies the specific objectives, requirements, and metrics from our assistance to Ukraine. It shifts \$4 billion away from direct budget support to Kyiv into security investments instead. And it fully funds the special inspector general for Ukraine created by the NDAA last year, further expanding already unprecedented visibility into how U.S. assistance is actually being used.

The legislation also designates \$9 billion above the President's request for U.S. defense needs, including \$2.4 billion for ongoing operations against Iran-backed terrorists in the Middle East. And, thanks to Republican efforts, it imposes strict new oversight measures on humanitarian assistance and ensures that not a single penny of U.S. taxpayer funds goes to the U.N. agency whose employees stoke hatred in Gaza and actually participated in the slaughter of Jews in Israel.

Underneath these essential provisions sit historic and urgent investments in American hard power, which is critical to our national defense.

Our allies and partners in Ukraine and Israel are fighting our shared adversaries, degrading their military capacity, and working to restore deterrence. Our friends in the Pacific are working to deter yet another one.

Together, they are facing the raw end of authoritarian aggression and terrorist savagery. Our colleagues have heard me say this before: American assistance to these efforts is not charity. It is an investment in cold, hard U.S. interests.

This is not a rhetorical device. It is not referring to some vague lines of efforts from which America expects to receive some trickle-down benefit. I mean quite literally spending tens of billions of dollars here in America, upgrading our capabilities, creating American manufacturing jobs, and expanding our defense industrial capacity to help us better compete with advanced adversaries.

Of just the funds this supplemental designates to support Ukrainian's defense, \$19.85 billion of it will be spent right here in America on replenishing our own arsenal. Another \$3.5 billion will be spent—again, here in America—to expand our industrial base's capacity to produce artillery and air-defense and long-range weapons. And \$15.4 billion will be spent—one more time, here in America—on weapons for Ukraine to continue degrading the military strength of a major U.S. adversary.

These investments create capacity that we, the United States, need for serious competition with our adversaries.

Of course, this doesn't even account for the massive streams of funding our allies and partners around the world are investing in American capabilities themselves, including more than \$120 billion and counting from NATO allies.

Overall, even accounting for direct assistance sent to allies like Israel, more than 75 percent of this legislation is bound for investments right here in America, and more than 60 percent of it goes to the defense industrial base, where increasing capacity is a direct investment in long-term strength abroad and prosperity here at home.

This is about rebuilding the arsenal of democracy and demonstrating to our allies and adversaries alike that we are serious about exercising American strength.

I can present these facts as frequently as necessary. It is what I have been doing quite literally for years.

Every one of our colleagues is capable of understanding that security assistance appropriated in support of Ukraine is money invested right here in America. Every one of our colleagues is capable of understanding that the investments this legislation makes in expanding production capacity—from artillery rounds to rocket motors, to submarines—are investments in readiness for long-term competition with China, a competition America cannot afford to lose.

Every single one of us knows what is at stake here, and it is time for every one of us to deal with it head-on.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset that I thank the Senator from Kentucky for his words on

the floor in support of assistance to Ukraine in its hour of need. I thank him for being consistent in that message.

Yesterday, after months of delay, 17 Republican Senators joined in a bipartisan effort to advance critical security and humanitarian aid. I want to thank them for stepping up and urge them to continue moving this bill to final passage and moving it to passage in the House of Representatives.

All the while, while we were giving our speeches here on the floor of the Senate and other places, Vladimir Putin has been sitting back and waiting for the United States to finally walk away from the Ukrainians, as they fight bravely to repel his bloody onslaught. Putin is hoping that Donald Trump will be reelected and that this Congress will discontinue aid to Ukraine. Meanwhile, the "message man" for the MAGA movement, Tucker Carlson, was in Moscow interviewing the former communist KGB agent Vladimir Putin, hoping, no doubt, to further his cynical strategy.

Is there anyone here who could remotely have imagined that many in the party of Ronald Reagan and John McCain would be actively voting against aid to stop Russian tyranny, that they would bend to the will of former President Trump, who has spoken favorably of the Russian despot?

This photograph captures a moment a few years ago. It captures a moment, 37 years ago, at the Brandenburg Gate, between East and West Germany, where President Reagan stood resolutely for freedom and told Gorbachev to tear down the wall.

This second photograph is more personal to me. About 10 years ago, when Senator John McCain and I were part of a delegation that represented colleagues from Arizona, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Wyoming, we went to Ukraine's Maidan Square in Kyiv to honor those who had been killed in the fight for freedom.

I am not alone in asking the same question that was asked yesterday by the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk. He said, "Ronald Reagan, who helped millions of us win back our freedom and independence, must be turning [over] in his grave" with what is happening now in Washington.

The Polish people are staunch allies of Ukraine and the United States, and they have long memories of Soviet tyranny. They know that critical American resolve is part of overcoming that tyranny, and we should never forget it.

I am proud to represent the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois. There are many Polish Americans there—great people. I think what they have done during this Ukrainian war is an amazing story. They have literally embraced the refugees from Ukraine. As one of the Polish officials told me: Senator, you won't find a refugee camp for Ukrainians in Poland. We bring them into our homes.

It is an amazing outpouring. When you ask them, what is motivating you?

He said: We remembered no one would do that for us when we faced the same tyranny in our own history.

They have made a difference. It is not just because of their love for their neighbors in Ukraine, but it is also the realization that, if Vladimir Putin conquers Ukraine, the next target could easily be Poland or the Baltic nations. They know that this fight, which is being waged against Putin in Ukraine, is their fight. We should realize the same.

Next week, a bipartisan group of us are attending the Munich Security Conference. It is an annual conference in Germany where we bring together the European nations and many others to discuss topics of the day. You can bet the No. 1 topic will be Ukraine. God forbid we fail to pass this defense supplemental before the Munich Conference. I don't know what I will say to our friends and allies in NATO and in Europe who stood by us and by the Ukrainian people for so long if we abandon them here in the U.S. Senate.

The first question that they will ask is, Will we approve the money necessary to buy the ammunition and equipment for the Ukrainians to fight on? We are going to answer that question here in the U.S. Senate in just a matter of hours.

NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg recently said that if Putin isn't stopped, he will continue his war beyond Ukraine, with grave consequences.

And make no mistake, it is not only Putin watching and savoring our failure to act. It is Iran, China, North Korea, and many others.

So let's get this done. Let's show Putin and the other tyrants of the world that they cannot divide and weaken us at home or with our allies abroad.

For months, my Republican colleagues refused to provide critical aid to Ukraine, Israel, Gaza, and Taiwan and to address urgent national security and humanitarian needs until we would consider and pass legislation to secure the American border. This week, we had an opportunity to vote on a bipartisan bill that would help us to secure the border and provide this essential national security funding. I had some concerns about the language in this, but I realized it was a bipartisan compromise.

Senator JAMES LANKFORD, speaking for the Republicans, had been negotiating literally for weeks to get the right language that could appeal to both Democrats and Republicans.

I want to thank Senator MURPHY and Senator KYRSTEN SINEMA for their resolve as well.

While I had some concerns about the proposal, as I said, I was prepared to support it with some changes. I am happy to report that it received the support of the National Border Patrol Council, the union that represents Border Patrol agents.

Despite all of this, Senate Republicans said they wanted to offer amend-

ments. Well, the way to offer an amendment is, first, to pass a motion to proceed to the bill. When that measure came up for support, we didn't have enough Republican support to pass it on the floor. Almost immediately after the bill was released, numerous Senate Republicans had come out in opposition to it.

And when the bill came to floor, they voted not to even consider it. Why? Because Donald Trump told them not to. And he was very bold about it. He said: Blame me, if you will. But any attempt to make border security changes should be stopped now so he can use the issue in the campaign. He said: "Blame it on me" if the bill fails.

Well, we will. Trump is apparently fearful that a bipartisan effort to secure the border would undermine his campaign rhetoric.

His interference could not have come at a worse time. We are facing the worst refugee crisis in modern history. With outdated laws and underfunded agencies, our immigration system is not up to the challenge. As a result, many migrants are stuck in our processing backlogs for years, without a work permit.

Most people don't know this fact, but I want to make it for the record. We have had about 36,000 migrants come into the city of Chicago, primarily from Texas. They were sent there under false pretenses that there were accommodations waiting and a job waiting for them. That was not the case. But the Governor of Texas didn't care, and he didn't care about their outcome and their plight—36,000, trying to find shelter for them. Some went to police stations and slept on the floor. Some slept in churches. The Catholic charities did an amazing job, as well as many others, to try to take care of them. And it has been a real hardship on the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois—36,000 people.

There is one thing most people don't realize. In the past year and a half, we have absorbed, in Chicago, 30,000 Ukrainian immigrants who have come from war-torn Ukraine to the city of Chicago.

Now, I hope you can understand that a city that has a section known as Ukrainian Village certainly welcomes these people. Families that sponsor them said that they would stand by them. And they became part of our society and part of our economy quickly, without a lot of rancor and with the understanding of people that they were going to add to America. And they were in desperate need.

So 30,000 Ukrainians were absorbed into Chicago without much fanfare. I have seen them at the churches and their schools, working in restaurants, doing the kind of work that immigrants are used to doing in America.

But the 36,000 who came in as migrants from Texas were sent in by the busload, without any warning and without any effort to try to assimilate them into the area before they arrived. The difference is very stark.

The legislation that we were going to consider before the Republicans killed it would have created a new system to process migrants quickly. It would have funded our frontline officials and immigration officers with \$20 billion to ensure that they are processed efficiently.

Think about that. The Republicans have been saying publicly for months that we need more resources at the border to stop the onslaught of people who are arriving. And they also believe—and I share the belief—that we need more surveillance at the border, not only for those coming across the border but also for those bringing across the border narcotics and other contraband dangerous to America.

So the bill, which they stopped this week with their vote on the floor, would have provided \$20 billion to ensure that they would be processed efficiently at the border and provide \$20 billion, at least, in new technology and resources to stop the onslaught of narcotics and drugs.

It would have ensured that asylum seekers with legitimate claims can get a work permit quickly and start working, as so many businesses across the Nation need.

Despite my concerns about this legislation, because it left out Dreamers, I was prepared to consider it and support it. The DREAM Act was a measure that I introduced some 22 years ago in an effort to give these young people, who were brought to this country by their parents and who grew up here and became part of America, a chance to finally prove themselves and earn their way into citizenship. I think it should be included in any measure that addresses immigration from this point forward.

I hope we can all agree on one thing: We need to work together in a bipartisan way to secure the border, after years of congressional failure. Bipartisanship requires compromise.

After all of the Senate Republicans' TV appearances, campaign photos at the border, and impassioned speeches on the floor, it only took one man to destroy this agreement, this hard-fought bipartisan agreement—Donald Trump.

I know my Republican colleagues understand the urgent need to secure the border. I am disappointed that they would let their fear of one man stop this body from doing its job.

We still have a chance to do the right thing when it comes to security. We can stand behind the people in Ukraine who are fighting bravely every single day.

I cannot imagine how America can explain to the world why it would walk away from this battle against Vladimir Putin. We know his ambitions beyond Ukraine are terrible, and innocent people will suffer. Let's let the Ukrainian soldiers fight bravely with our support with a vote in the Senate today.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I don't need to tell the people in this body or on the other side of the Capitol that the public view of Washington, DC, is not very good. Our numbers in public opinion numbers oftentimes are in the single digits, and they are there for good reason. They are there because oftentimes people only see politics here all the time. They see bodies and individuals who work for the parties; they don't work for the good of America.

What we saw earlier this week just confirms that, where we had a bill that came out to address border security—particularly on the southern border, but it does good things for the northern border too. It addresses border security in this country, where we are seeing people coming across the border—the southern border in particular. We don't know who they are, and it is just flat a national security issue.

When I go home to Montana, I hear it from everybody. I hear it from families, from business owners, from policemen to mayors—you name it. In Montana—and I don't think Montana is different from any other State—this is a big issue. People understand the southern border is broken, and they want us, the folks who serve in Washington, DC, their representatives to the government, to do something about it.

Over the last many years, multiple administrations, we have seen people go to the border and talk about how things are really bad down there: They are bad because we have undocumented folks coming across the border in record numbers. They are bad because we have fentanyl coming into this country that is killing people and ruining families.

Then they come back and go around the country talking about how miserably bad it is on the southern border and how it needs to be fixed. They are right.

Unfortunately—this shouldn't be about press releases and emails and newsletters and interviews at night; this should be about getting something done to fix the problem.

So what transpired about 4 months ago is that we had a bill on the floor then—funding for Ukraine. I believe there was funding for Israel, and I believe there was funding for the Indo-Pacific. There were some in this body who said: This bill is going nowhere until we get something that addresses the problems at the southern border.

I was standing right over there when one of the Senators said: We get southern border—Republicans; Democrats get Ukraine funding.

Well, he was wrong. The truth is, the United States gets southern border protection, and U.S. citizens get to help Ukraine and support democracy and make sure that Putin isn't successful in taking over Ukraine and ultimately the rest of the Europe.

But nonetheless, there are three people who went out. They were given the blessing to negotiate a bipartisan—which is the way things should be done

around here and are done around here—a bipartisan southern border bill. The two people, the Republican and the Democrat or the Democrat and the Republican—however you want to place it—happen to be the chairman and ranking member of the Homeland Appropriations Subcommittee. The other was a Member who is an Independent who lives in a State that borders the southern border, Arizona.

So these folks went down and they worked and worked and worked. I have been part of these negotiations. Quite frankly, they are never easy. Nobody gets everything they want. There is compromise. There are negotiations. In the end, you thread the needle, and you come up with a bill that actually secures the southern border, that, by the way, any one of those three negotiators would tell you they would not have written themselves, but through the negotiating process, they came up with a bill.

I am going to tell you, it was a pretty darn good bill. They rolled it out last Sunday night for all of us to see, some 300-plus pages. I got to read that bill. But the interesting thing is, before the bill was even rolled out, some of the folks who serve in this body said “I oppose it.” Before they even had a chance to look at it, they said “I oppose it” because they were told to oppose the bill.

Now, look, we are all elected by our citizens in our States to come here. I would hope we all have a mind, I would hope we all can think, and I would hope we could all discern fact from fiction. But when somebody says “Vote against it” and you just vote against it after you have been in your State—you have heard what a big issue this is, and you have considered what can happen if we do nothing versus what could happen if we do something. Yet, for political purposes—not because it is bad policy but for political purposes—a person says “Don't fix it,” and, almost like a cult, people here said “We are voting no.” Many of them have not read it.

It is unbelievable to me. I have seen a lot of hypocrisy in this place, but it is unbelievable to me the hypocrisy in that vote, as a condition of national security—and folks in this body turn their backs on fixing the problem. Why? Because they want to keep it a political issue, which is exactly why the people look at Washington, DC, and say: Do you know what? Those folks don't represent us. They are in it for themselves. They just want everything to be an upheaval.

It confirms that thought.

So what does the bill do? What does this compromise bill do for America? It funds \$20 billion in security for the southern border—for manpower, for technology, and to attack the fentanyl crisis, which is a scourge on this country. It includes the FEND Off Fentanyl Act, which puts serious harm to China's wallet for putting the precursor elements of fentanyl into Mexico.

It changes the asylum laws. It raises the bar—exponentially—and stops folks

who come to the border illegally from gaming the system.

It requires—it requires—the President to shut down the border when they can't handle the people. Look, don't take my word for it. The National Border Patrol Council, some 18,000 Border Patrol agents have endorsed this bill. These are the folks that are charged, by the way, with keeping our border safe.

The acting director of Customs and Border Protection endorsed this bill and said it “would provide the strongest set of tools we have had in decades.” The chief of the U.S. Border Patrol said on FOX News that “this bill that would have added additional hundreds of border patrol agents to our rank and file, that would have given us more technology, would have given us more equipment infrastructure. Of course I'm going to be supportive of that.”

And one of the Senators that negotiated this bill—a strong conservative I might add—Republican Senator JAMES LANKFORD from Oklahoma said that this would have stopped 800,000 entries in the past 4 months if it had already been signed into law.

The hypocrisy is stunning. Senators and House Members, who went back to their home States and talked about how bad the southern border was and how we needed to act, now have flip-flopped.

These are politicians who claim to work bipartisanship, but they oppose bipartisan solutions. They are the same ones who have cried loudly for years that we need changes—policy changes—on the border, but they are revealing in plain sight that it isn't about policy issues; it is about politics.

And the disinformation campaign that has come along with this is rich. Claims that 5,000 migrants would be allowed into this country every day is patently false; and if they had read the bill, they would have known it.

There are those who say that Congressional action isn't needed. That also is false. We control the purse strings; we control the policy language. And only Congress can fix our asylum laws; only Congress can make sure we are giving the Border Patrol the resources that they need to secure the border.

I wish this place worked; I really do. This is the greatest country in the world—not by accident, because our forefathers acted responsibly that we didn't have campaign seasons that never end; that we could actually sit down and negotiate, not as Democrats and Republicans but as Americans, to do what is right for this country.

If we don't start acting like adults in this place and start thinking and acting reasonably and listening to our constituents—not listening to one person but listen to the folks that sent you here; even when you disagree with them, you should be listening to them—to try to fix the problems, I fear for this country's future. And I don't say that lightly.

There is plenty of evidence out there that shows that China would love to replace us as the premier economy and the premier military in this world. That is not something that we should take lightly. That is something that we should take very, very seriously.

And when Congress doesn't do their job, when Congress doesn't even debate a bill to deal with a serious problem in this country, it does not speak well of us, and it only empowers our opponents out there, the countries that want to replace us in the world.

I don't know what will transpire with this negotiated border agreement, but I do hope that we get another opportunity to vote on it, on the policy that was negotiated by Lankford and Sinema and Murphy. They worked hard. At a bare minimum, they deserve—they deserve—but more importantly, the American people deserve—to hear a debate on this bill and find out not what Facebook or Twitter or what the internet says about this bill but find out exactly what is in this bill.

Because I can tell you Montanans are tired of DC political games and, quite frankly, so am I.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### CHILD TAX CREDIT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, we have an opportunity. We have an opportunity to come together to cut taxes for American families in my State and for the families of more than 500,000 children, and to cut taxes for American manufacturers.

The deal negotiated by Finance Chairman WYDEN, a Democrat, in the Senate and Ways and Means Chairman SMITH in the House, a Republican, along with their colleagues of both parties, has overwhelming bipartisan support. It passed the committee in the House 40 to 3. It passed on the House floor with 357 votes.

When does that happen here? It is how Congress is supposed to work.

We talk with the people with whom we serve. We hear their concerns, and we act. Families are dealing with costs that are far too high because corporations continue to raise prices to pay for executive bonuses and stock buybacks and higher profit margins.

I often think of this, because I hear, when my wife and I are at the grocery store near our church in Brecksville, when I am out talking to people at a roundtable, or just at an airport, people talk about high food prices. One of the reasons—the biggest reason—when people go to the grocery store, they realize they are paying for stock buybacks and executive bonuses.

The American manufacturers have been telling us they can't compete with

countries like China without more investment in research and development, but expiring provisions mean the Tax Code isn't rewarding that kind of investment as much as it should.

I heard in Ohio from people in East Palestine. I am going for, I believe, the ninth time there next week. They are worried. This is the place, the community in Ohio on the Pennsylvania border in eastern Ohio, where the Norfolk Southern train derailed, causing all kinds of hardship for people. But people in East Palestine are worried, they tell me, that they can be hit by a surprise tax bill for the payments they rightly received from Norfolk Southern after the derailment last year. It is unacceptable. People in East Palestine have endured enough.

So we came together to write a bipartisan, consensus bill that does all of those things. At a time when Washington seems pretty broken, we have an opportunity to come together and show the American people we can get things done. We can cut their taxes, we can support their businesses, we can help keep intellectual property in this country, we can help create jobs, and we can help families.

The expansion of the child tax credit will help Ohio working families keep up with rising costs, including all the extra expenses that come with raising kids. It has broad support. Everyone—from the Nuns on the Bus to the National Association of Evangelicals—supports expanding the child tax credit.

I know the Presiding Officer, the Senator from Arizona, and I have talked about how important the child tax credit is.

It supports work. The nonpartisan scorekeepers at the Joint Committee on Taxation confirmed that this bill won't reduce work.

When I hear from Ohio parents, the No. 1 thing they say they use their tax cut for is childcare, so they can work. We know how expensive childcare is.

Also, when we passed this child tax credit—it is a tax cut for working families, where 90 percent of children and the families of 2 million children in my State benefited from it. We passed it 3 or 4 years ago, and it expired, unfortunately. But I got letters from families all the time saying: Now my daughter can play soccer, and we can afford the school fees. Now my son can be in a school play and afford the fees. Now we can maybe go to a movie once a month. These are all the kinds of things that families living on the edge or families not quite living on the edge contend with. It gives them that.

It is key for Ohio manufacturers that invest in research and innovation. It is expensive. It is vital for keeping up with global competitors. These tax credits will allow Ohio companies to compete.

Last month, I did a news conference with two longtime friends of mine, two former Ohio Republican Congressmen, Steve Stivers and Pat Tiberi. Steve

Stivers is now president and CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and Pat Tiberi is now CEO of the Ohio Business Roundtable. They both talked about how crucial these tax cuts are for Ohio businesses.

They are a major priority for American companies, as my Republican colleagues in the Senate have made clear to us all year. That is why Chairman WYDEN and many of us worked with Republicans to write a bill that is a win-win for everybody. It is a true bipartisan process from the start. It includes ideas that have support from both parties.

Take the lookback provision in the child tax credit, allowing parents to use the previous year's income to make sure they get the maximum possible tax cut. This is an idea that Senator CASSIDY from Louisiana and I worked on together during the pandemic. We got support from both parties. This will make this bill work better. It will enable this bill to help children and families more. It is the same option that corporations have in the Tax Code. Why not make it available to families? Corporations often do lookbacks to look at the year before in calculating their taxes. Why wouldn't we make it available to families too?

The way Chairman WYDEN and Chairman SMITH negotiated this bill is how we should do this. We listen to the people we serve.

I know that Chairman WYDEN spoke with a number of Republican members on the Finance Committee. He spoke with me often during this process as we worked on both the R&D tax credit and the child tax credit.

I know that Chair SMITH worked with members of both parties on his committee. That is why he passed it out of his committee 40 to 3. Imagine 40 to 3 on a tax bill in a Congress that has difficulty getting a consensus and getting things done.

We made sure Members of both parties were in the room in these negotiations or were in the room in terms of having discussions. We got something done that brought people together. It supports families. It supports businesses. It includes priorities of both parties. It supports work. It supports American innovation. It won't add to the deficit. It is paid for by cracking down on fraud. There is no reason not to pass this deal.

I mean, again, 357 votes in the House, overwhelming bipartisan support in the committee, then in the House—there is no reason to wait other than playing politics. We see it far too often here.

We need to move. Tax season is underway. Families and businesses need these tax cuts now. Why would we walk away from a bipartisan bill that we could pass today if Members would put aside egos and politics and all that too often gets in the way. Let's come together to cut taxes for working families and cut taxes for Ohio manufacturers.

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

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

#### BORDER SECURITY

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, the Senate will be in session this weekend—including Super Bowl Sunday, which is fine by me—to deal with this bill that now, as everyone knows, is about Ukraine, funding for Ukraine and its war effort, funding for Israel, funding for Taiwan, and some other matters.

I will dispense with the Israel and Taiwan funding because that is a pretty straightforward one that I think has very strong support here. I am for it. I am also for helping Ukraine against Russia. I do believe we have a national interest in helping Ukraine against Russia.

I would just summarize it this way: If you look at China, which most people would agree is the U.S.'s biggest adversary at this point for global influence, the Chinese are hoping one of two things is going to happen. The first is, they are hoping that we are going to get stuck in Ukraine, along with what is happening in the Middle East, and that we are going to be drained by it and we won't be able to focus on the Indo-Pacific. But if we do become disengaged, then what their hope is—they will go around telling people: See, we told you America is unreliable and a power in decline. So I believe our goal when it comes to Ukraine is to be helpful to Ukraine in a way that doesn't drain us, in a way that doesn't harm our alliances around the world.

I have my own personal views on this. I have shared it in the past. I have had further confirmation of it over the last 24 hours—that where I think Ukraine eventually winds up is, I don't believe the Russians can ever achieve their initial objectives no matter what happens, which is to take all of Ukraine, all the way to Kyiv. I also think it is going to be very difficult for a country the size of Ukraine, no matter how much help it gets, to completely destroy the Russian Federation, which, no matter how bad they have been militarily, just has a size advantage.

But I do believe that at some point, both of these countries are going to try to figure a way out. The question is, Which one of the two is going to have the most leverage and the best deal possible, and will Ukraine be able to emerge from this as a democracy, as a nation that is not under the thumb of Vladimir Putin—another Belarus, as an example? I think we have a national interest in the outcome. It is not an unlimited national interest. It doesn't mean we spend however much they need for however long it takes. But there is an interest.

I just wanted to say that at the outset. I say that because obviously I am informed by my work on the Intelligence Committee, the Foreign Relations Committee, and my interest in foreign policy, because I think our job here in the Federal Government—we get involved in a lot of things that are none of our business, but foreign policy and national security are a key part of the Federal Government and what we are supposed to be doing here.

I do believe that in the short and long term, there are things there—I don't think I need to convince anyone about Israel and Taiwan—that involve the national security of the United States and what the world is going to look like in 5, 10, 15 years.

That said, I would imagine—not that I imagine, actually—I know that there are people—if you walked into many places in this country right now and you explained to them what was happening, they would be puzzled. People would say, no matter how they may feel about Ukraine—I think for most Americans, frankly, it is not a priority, not because they like Putin and they like Russia but because we have a lot of problems that people are dealing with in their everyday lives. I think most people would say: OK. But if we are going to do that for Ukraine, if we are going to help Ukraine deal with their invasion, shouldn't we first or at least at the same time deal with our invasion, what is happening to our country?

So you guys are going to meet all weekend. You are going to fight. You are going to call each other names. You are going to drag this thing out. You are going to have this big thing that we never do. We never stay here on Sundays—it is fine with me. But we never do all of this, but when we do it, it is always for somebody else or something that is not as important to us. But for something that is important to us, something that has to do with America, with our country, it never happens.

How, in essence, can you be helping Ukraine with their invasion but not be helping America with its invasion? And it is an invasion, what is happening at our southern border.

These are very conservative numbers, but they are incredibly accurate. They come right from both public and nonpublic—not classified but nonpublic—information. They are products that are produced from the House committee, for example. Let's just say that from January 20, 2021, 3.3 million people have entered the United States illegally and been released into the country. Of those 3.3 million people who have entered the country illegally, 99.7 percent of them are still here. They have not been deported or removed. Of the 3.3 million who have been released into this country, over 617,000 of them—and these are old numbers; these are numbers from last month—of the 3.3 million people who entered the country illegally and were released,

617,000 of them either have criminal convictions or pending criminal charges. So we have had at least 600,000 convicted criminals, suspected criminals, enter the country illegally, free to roam the country now.

People ask, well, how did this happen? Because it has never been zero. Let's be clear. It has never been zero. There have never been zero illegal people entering into America. But how did this happen? Well, let's first start with our law.

When people talk about immigration around here, they pretend it is completely unregulated: We need new laws to fix it because the laws are all messed up, and we don't regulate.

No. The immigration laws in America can be summarized. I mean, it is a complex area of law, but at its core, it is quite simple. Immigration law in America says this: These are the people who are allowed to be in the United States of America, and if someone who is not allowed to be in the United States of America enters illegally, you are to detain them through removal, meaning you are to detain them in immigration detention until their case is either resolved or they are removed from the country. That is the law of the United States, and that has been the law of the United States for quite some time.

With that detention requirement that you hold them until they are removed, we have always had exceptions, narrow exceptions. For example, if the Dalai Lama shows up at the border of the United States and says "Hey, I am here because the Chinese are trying to kill me"—exception, right? There have always been exceptions.

These are supposed to be narrow exceptions, and they are supposed to apply to individuals case by case—humanitarian, things of that nature. But for the first time in American history, the current President of the United States decided to make the exception the rule—the rule. It became the rule that if you arrived here, we would not detain you. The exception became those we were detaining. I just gave you the numbers of the people who were released. So the exceptions ate up the rule, and that is how this happens.

Why it happens is not hard to understand. I assure you guys—listen, I live in an immigrant community. When it comes to immigration, I have been in the game for 10 years making these things—you know, looking at these things longer. I live it. I live it. My entire family are immigrants. My wife's entire family are immigrants. All of my neighbors are immigrants. I can't drive two blocks and go anywhere and not be—other than Miami, FL—surrounded with immigrants from all over the hemisphere and all over the world. So when I talk to you about these things, I didn't read about it in a magazine; I didn't see a documentary; I didn't have some briefing; I talk to people who show me. They have shown me. They said: Look, this is the cash-

out payment that I sent to some guy to bring my sister and her husband. Here is the Venmo that I sent to some guy to help my family get from Cuba to Nicaragua and from Nicaragua to the United States.

They don't know what the immigration law is. They don't know about exceptions, asylum. Here is what they know: They know people who have come here, turned themselves in, said "I am here," blah, blah, blah, and they were released. They know people who did it, and those people tell other people, and the traffickers advertise it.

So what happens is that when people figure out—and they figure it out pretty quickly. Human beings are incentive-based creatures. All of us are. That is why we pass laws to punish crime. That is why we raise taxes on cigarettes—we want people to smoke less.

We are incentive-based creatures, and when people know that if you can make it inside of the United States and turn yourself in, your chances of being released are 85, 90-something percent, more people are going to come.

The numbers don't lie. I don't have it with me. I tried to blow it up; couldn't print it on time. But there is a graph that shows—it looks like one of those things, you know, those echocardiograms, except this one goes straight up. It basically says, here is the number in December of 2019, January of 2020, February of 2021, it just spikes right up. Why did it spike?

It spiked because we told people, by the way, if you are a single adult—which was the biggest driver that really changed everything—if you are a single adult and you come into America illegally and you turn yourself in, we will interview you—maybe not even interview you—and we will release you into the country. People figure it out.

And the way you solve it is to reverse that. The law didn't change. The immigration law today looks the same as it did in 2019. No immigration law has changed in America. What changed is this policy by Executive order.

Remember, when we pass laws, it has to be executed. So look what is happening with crime. It is illegal in every jurisdiction in America to shoplift, but the places where you see a spike in shoplifting are the places where the prosecutors have decided we are not going to prosecute those cases.

And when you tell people, yes, it is illegal to do something but we are not going to prosecute it, we are not going to go after it, you are going to get it.

So how do you solve this? You solve it the same way you created it: by reversing what created it. That is how you solve it.

And so a lot of us said: Well, look, if we are going to do all this for Ukraine and all of these other countries—but Ukraine was really—and this is something that you really want, it is important, can't we also—so that we look, at least, half sane to the people in this country that can't understand how we

can spend all this time and energy not helping ourselves before we help other countries—can we at least deal with the border?

So they said: OK, we are going to do something on the border.

And they spent three, four—what, I don't know—8 weeks, whatever, negotiating a deal, and then they produced it. I didn't have anything to do with that deal. I am not condemning the people that did it. I have done immigration negotiations in the past; it is difficult. This is even more difficult because it is in the midst of a mass-migration crisis.

But they negotiated a deal, but I didn't negotiate it. I didn't even know what was in it until Sunday. And I read it—I read it twice, actually—went through it with the knowledge base that I have. But they negotiated a deal that most of us, for the most part, to be fair, had nothing to do with negotiating. And I realized pretty quickly, this is not going to reverse.

You can call it whatever you want. You can call it border security; you can label it anything you want. But this is not going to solve our problem. And, immediately, they said: Oh, the Republicans are a bunch of liars. The first is: These Republicans, they wanted a border deal; we gave them a border deal; and now they want to tank the whole thing. They changed their minds.

I think that was the President: We gave them the exact deal they asked for, and they changed their mind.

You didn't give me the exact deal I asked for. I asked for measures, steps, that would actually solve the migration crisis. This bill doesn't do that. In fact, I never even asked for a bill. I am not against some of the language that is in there. You want to change the standard on asylum? Long overdue; but that alone is not going to stop the migration crisis. That is what I asked for.

I didn't negotiate it. I didn't even know what was in it, like I told you, until Sunday. And so the solution that I want to see and did want to see and continue to want to see, the solution that we could actually go back to people and say: Guys, we did something real on the border. Yes, we are going to help Ukraine with their invasion, but we actually did—something real is also going to happen with our invasion. That was not this bill, despite whatever people may say about it.

We rejected the toughest border deal imaginable, is the other thing that people say. You know, like, if somehow, they figured out a way—you know, they sprinkled holy water upon a vampire with this thing. Look, I could spell out a bunch of problems in this bill. I don't have time; I am not going to spend the time going through every detail.

This emergency thing they brag about, emergency power to shut down the border, they don't tell you it is limited to 270 days, and the President can suspend it at any time. All the President has to say is: It is not in our

national interest. We need to suspend the emergency.

By the way, even in the emergency, you still have to process 1,400 people a day, illegal immigrants a day, even in the midst of an emergency.

But let me focus on what I think is—what I believe to be the most blatant trap that was put in place in this bill. And it is one that people don't necessarily spot right away if you don't understand immigration law and how it has been applied over the last decade.

So there is this thing in the bill—remember, one of the things that people use about immigration is asylum. It takes too long; it takes 8 to 10 years; huge backlog; courts; the like. It is true. And it is one of the incentives, by the way, because people know if you release me pending a hearing, 10 years from now you won't even know where I am, much less show up at a hearing.

So they come back and say: Oh, we are prepared to solve that. How did they solve it? Well, they create what I call the asylum corps. In essence, they are going to go out and they are going to hire thousands of Department of Homeland Security agents—bureaucrats, agents—not judges—to process these claims, potentially right at the border. Right?

So right at the border, these agents will be able to interact with an illegal immigrant, interview them, ask them some questions, and they will have the power, they will have the power right there at the border to do three things.

The first is they could say, no, you don't qualify, you are out of here. Or we are going to detain you, and you are out of here. They could do that. That has not been the history of what has happened until now.

And let me just tell you, from what I know, most of the people who sign up for these jobs and this duty do not sign up to kick people out; they sign up to help people get in. But that is the asylum, so that is the first power.

The other two things are the likeliest one. The first is: We think you might have a claim. We are going to release you pending a hearing before a judge, and you get an immediate work permit.

Right now, you have to wait 6 months for a work permit, even if you are released like these people. An immediate work permit—you want to talk about a migration magnet? When people figure out, if I get there, I have an X percent chance of being given an immediate work permit, that is a migration magnet.

But here is the third thing they can do: They can give you asylum right there and then—not a judge; a member of this new asylum corps can literally give you asylum right there and then.

Now, let me be fair. The law says they can do it under the convention against torture, which is an international treaty.

Well, what is that? Well, let me tell you how that has been applied. How it



has been applied is that the convention against torture isn't just like, we are going to send you back somewhere where they are going to waterboard you.

The convention against torture that has been applied in most of the activists' groups that argue means we cannot remove people from this country if we are going to send them back to a place where they might be kidnapped or where they might be assaulted, not by just the government but by non-government criminal gangs.

So, basically, if you come from a country where gangs kidnap people, where gangs kill people, where gangs extort people, where gangs threaten people, where gangs assault people—if you come from a country where that happens, we cannot send you back there under the convention of torture. That is their interpretation of it.

My friends, that is like 100 countries on Earth. That is like almost every country represented in the number of people that arrive at the border. So, basically, what you will have is an asylum corps with the power to grant people asylum right at the border. And let me tell you the difference between the asylum corps and an immigration judge: If an immigration judge makes that decision, the Attorney General can still step in and reverse it. These are irreversible decisions.

And let me tell you what asylum means. Asylum is basically a green card. You are now 5 years away from being a U.S. citizen. That number is not going to be zero. If that law and that provision had been in place today, some of these 3.3 million people would have already been a year or two into their 5-year wait to become citizens and voters of the United States of America. That is in that bill.

And that is what it means when you read past the language and the shalls and the this and that and all of that, that is what that language means. And you want me to vote for a bill so that a year or two from now when the news reports come out that the asylum corps has granted asylum and a 5-year path to citizenship to 500,000 people and everybody here goes: Well, I didn't know that was in that law—that is in the law; that is in that bill; that is there.

And I could go on; there are other things. The point is this was a trap. It was put in there in place, that was the goal. This is not a border—that would actually incentivize immigration, knowing what it is that incentivizes people to come.

The other lie is, whoa, without a law, we can't do anything about the border. I already explained to you how we got here in the first place: We stopped detaining everybody.

Remember, a few years ago it was—again, let's go back and be clear. The children who were being detained was because before we turned them over to some guy who claimed to be their uncle, we had to make sure he wasn't Jeffrey Dahmer; we had to make sure

he wasn't some pedophile; we had to make sure it was really their uncle. And in the meantime, you have to put them somewhere. But that was inhumane.

But now it has spread. Now it is the detention of anybody is inhumane. You have people out there saying: By the way, we shouldn't even put ankle bracelets on people who are released; that is inhumane.

But the incentive that drove the immigration was we stopped detaining single adults. And the word got out really fast. And the traffickers—this is a business for them. They traffic people; they move people; they move drugs. They move contraband, and they move people. And they knew this. And they sell it. They advertise it.

I wish I would have brought some of the pamphlets that they hand out or pictures of some of the things they put up on social media in these countries advertising the service.

You don't need a law to fix that because the law hasn't changed. What you need is to reverse the Executive orders, the decisions of the administration. And the President can do that. In fact, I heard yesterday—I think it was NBC News or something reported the President is now considering executive actions on the border.

So at least they have acknowledged that they have that power. A reporter asked me yesterday, well, you guys are always against executive actions. Well, the executive action I think they need to take is to reverse the executive actions that he has taken which created this crisis.

And there are other things that he can do. He can do the "return to Mexico"; he can do the "safe third country." By the way, the "safe third country" one is an interesting one. I was kind of involved when that was put in place. And initially—because it is counterintuitive. Initially, a lot of people said: Why would these countries agree to that? So let me tell you why Honduras would agree to it, why El Salvador agreed to it. Let me tell you why. Because those are transit countries.

And safe third country basically said: If you come through that country, once you step foot in that country, you are automatically disqualified from getting asylum in the United States.

Now, I have nothing against these countries, but I promise you that the migrants that are going through El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala were going through. They didn't go to Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, or Nicaragua, for that matter, to stay there. They went there because it was on the way to where they were trying to go.

The minute migrants realized if I go there, if I go to Honduras, I automatically cannot get into the United States, they stopped going to Honduras or they stopped going to El Salvador. The countries figured it out. I bet you we can get many more countries to

sign up for something like that, because they are bearing the brunt of being in the middle of the migration corridor. We could return to that as well.

And, yes, we can build barriers. I remember after the horrible events of January 6 here in the Capitol, the first thing that went up around this entire building was a fence with barbed wire and National Guard. The first thing they did to protect the Capitol and themselves was to deputize National Guard from all over America and to put fences around the Capitol, some of the biggest fences you have ever seen. And they went up like that.

But, somehow, when our country is being invaded and you put up a fence and you send the National Guard, this administration will go to the Supreme Court and try to stop you. So they will do it to protect themselves, but they won't do it to protect America.

My friends, the truth is that Biden doesn't want to stop the border crisis, and the reason why is politics. I know his memory is probably not the best, but I remember that he spent 3 years repeatedly saying—not just him, all the deputies, people in this Chamber, all these know-it-alls on television: There is no crisis at the border. There is not a crisis. It is being exaggerated, exaggerated by a bunch of xenophobes and racists.

But now it is a top issue in the country to voters. It wasn't a crisis until it became a crisis in New York and Chicago and all these major cities around the country who now suddenly—you know, when it was happening to Texas, when this was happening on the border in Arizona, as if somehow all the people that came here were—3.3 million people were all going to stay in Eagle Pass, TX. But once it got into their cities, once it started impacting them, now it became a problem too. Once you had to start closing schools because you needed to make it a migrant shelter, now it was a crisis. Now when you have a gang of pickpockets running through New York assaulting police officers, now it is a crisis. Now, when the residents of your own city are screaming at you, "Why are you spending all this money when we have our own homeless problem?" now you have a crisis. And voters were saying it too.

And so I imagine—I am certain—that the people involved in the Biden reelection effort came to him and said: Sir, we need to have a plan. We need to have a plan, and the plan needs to be something that, at least, looks like we are trying to stop it but doesn't upset that element of our base who actually believes that anyone who comes here should be allowed to come here.

And that element exists. That element exists. There are people in American politics and in American political discourse who believe that, if you make it across the border, virtually anyone who comes here—unless, like, the worst possible human being—if you make it across the border, you should



be allowed to stay, even if you came illegally.

They had to come up with a plan. So what was the plan? Here was the plan, and I called this out in December. The plan is: Let's do a border deal. Let's call it a border deal, but let's make sure it doesn't stop migration because we don't want to upset our base. But let's also make sure it is bipartisan. Let's get some Republicans to sign on to it, and then let's get it passed through the Senate. And then when the House kills it, we can say: I, Joe Biden, tried to fix the border, but these Neanderthals, MAGA House members, they killed it. So blame them from now on.

In fact, I am not speculating here. There is nothing that I am just like psychically coming up with. There is an article in *POLITICO* in which an unnamed source in the Biden campaign was saying: This is perfect. If they pass it, we can claim credit for a bipartisan deal and tell people: Now, be patient. It is going to take time to work, but it is bipartisan. If it doesn't pass, he can blame the Republicans and say they own it.

And those talking points were already being said, including by some of my colleagues here on some Sunday shows that I saw. They were already saying that even before the deal was already out there. That was the plan.

But he will never fix it—one, because there are people in the base that don't want it to be fixed. There are people in American politics, as I said already, who think anyone who comes here should be allowed to come and stay. There are others, frankly, who see a bunch of voters. They see a bunch of future voters.

Do you know what? Let's find a way to get people asylum. Asylum is perfect. It puts them instantly on a path to citizenship. In 4 to 6 years from now, we are going to have a bunch of new voters, and they will vote for us, and they will remember we are the ones that let them in.

So that is another element of it.

But I want to go back to the one about the elements of their base that believe in open borders, whether they admit it or not. And some of them actually do admit it. There are actually people who have told me to my face, "People should be allowed to live in any country that they want," which, I suppose, in a free society, you can have a right to any opinion you want. I assure you, it is not a majority position in America. In fact, I assure you, it is not a majority position in any country. But, somehow, they think it should be our position.

And if you don't think that the elements of a base have influence over our politics, I submit to you what is happening right now with Israel policy. So we have already seen, I would imagine, a small minority—but nonetheless a minority—of radical, anti-Semitic pro-Hamas activists who are out there. They are threatening to vote against

Joe Biden. They have said it: We will vote. Do not count on our vote. We are going to vote against you. Your name is "Genocide Joe"—they call him.

They disrupt his speeches. He tried to give a speech the other day. I think there were like 40 interruptions. They have been in the hallways here. It is not just the weirdos from these CODEPINK communist groups, but it is others, screaming at us: You need to do this; you need to do that—all this stuff that is out there.

But they say: Sir, you have a problem. We have an element of our base in some States that say they are not going to vote for you because you are helping Israel too much.

And that is where you see the leak. The first leak that came out is: Oh, the President hung up on Netanyahu.

Then you see another leak a couple of weeks ago: We are going to have a two-state solution.

Never mind the fact that the two most prominent Palestinian groups, sadly, in the region are groups—one of them is going to wind up in the government of the second state—and these are groups that do things like give cash rewards for killing Jews. The more Jews you kill, the more money your family gets if you are a martyr. Pay to slay—it is real. Groups that, for example, in their schools, when their kids are 4, 5, 6 years of age, their school books, their textbooks teach them: Jews are subhuman, and they are evil—groups that are not interested in a two-state solution. These groups are calling for a one-state solution: "from the river to the sea"—no Jews, only them.

So let's give them their own country. Now, I would love for that to be possible, but not as long as those people are around. But that is the other thing they threw out there.

And then, yesterday, we read that the White House has sent emissaries. Top aides from the White House went to Michigan to meet with some of these upset activists to see if we can somehow bring them along so they will vote for him in November and stop being mean to Joe Biden over Israel.

Well, do you know who some of these people were? Multiple—more than one of them—were people that have openly—openly—been supportive of both Hamas and Hezbollah and call them "freedom fighters." At least one of them is a guy who has publicly said, on multiple occasions, that the U.S. Government is controlled by Zionist money, by Jewish money. That is who the White House went to meet with yesterday.

And then, last night, we are treated to a press conference by the President of the United States, and in what I imagine was an unscripted moment—maybe not—he said Israel's response to Hamas "has been over the top," which is ironic, because I support Israel funding, but here we are today being asked to pass a bill that has all this money for Israel, which I support.

So what are we funding? We are funding Israel's "over the top" campaign against Hamas?

So it doesn't make any sense, except for the politics. That is how politics influences all of this. You know, I would conclude by just taking us back to the original point, which is, the reason why I have voted already to move to proceed to this. I just don't know how you go to people in everyday life, hard-working people, and say to them—people who are upset because they feel like our country's border is being overrun, and it is—and they say: How come we are not doing anything about that, something real? Like, why aren't we making that a priority? Why don't we ever read that the Senate is staying in through the weekend arguing and fighting and working on something real to stop the border? How come that never gets a priority?

The growing number of Americans who always feel like, when it comes to a major issue and a major fight, they are always second—behind another country, behind another group, behind somebody else—who have been, for the better part of 20 years, told: We have to take care of others before we focus on your problems. Let's send our jobs and our factories to other countries because it is good for the global economy. I know we have homeless veterans committing record amounts of suicides and these tragedies, but let's spend more money housing migrants in this country illegally to begin with.

People who watched the news last week, OK, a roving gang of migrants from Venezuela—I mean, it is interesting because, for a year now, the Venezuelan community in South Florida has been telling me to be careful because some of the people who are coming from Venezuela now are clearly gang bangers. And, you know, you have to prove that. I am not saying it is zero percent, but they were right. They warned me a year ago, and now we are seeing it. And you saw it last week when—what?—five or seven of them assaulted police officers, were arrested, were released within an hour without any bail, flipped the middle finger to America, and walked right out, back to the migrant shelter, paid for by taxpayers.

You saw it last Sunday, when an illegal migrant of Palestinian descent went to Nassau County in New York, walked up to some guy's house and tore down his Israeli and American flags. When the guy confronted him, he assaulted the guy and started screaming things like: We are going to kill all the Jews.

Those are just two examples. I could give you more, but they are there. People are watching this stuff, and they are angry. They say: Why don't you guys do something about that? Why aren't you staying through the weekend about that? Why aren't those people being deported immediately?

How about these people here on student visas? You are a visitor to the

United States of America on a student visa—on a student visa or whatever visa—and you are in the street calling for “intifada,” but we can’t deport you. They won’t deport you. We know who you are. You are not here illegally; you are here on a visa. If you had said all that stuff, we probably wouldn’t have given you the visa, but now that you are here, you get to keep the visa? Deport those people. They won’t. Why aren’t you fighting about that?

Most Americans have nothing against Ukraine. Most Americans want to help Ukraine, but I don’t think it is unreasonable for them to say: Well, what about us? What about our country? What about our invasion? What about our border?

And I want to say this with as much respect as I can. There is nobody in the Senate that can lecture me on immigration. This is not a political drive. I have lived it my whole life.

This is not immigration—3.3 million people released into the country. And 5 to 10,000 people a day illegally arrive in the country. That is not immigration. Immigration is a good thing. Mass migration is a bad thing, and that is what this is. This is mass migration, and it is not good for anyone. It is not even good for the migrants, many of whom are raped and killed along the way.

It is good for the traffickers. It is good for the enemies of this country, but it is not good for the migrants. This is mass migration, and it reminds me, well, if you are against this and you want to be strict about immigration, that is anti-immigrant, which is silly, at least if they say it to me.

But I remember, like, I am not anti-rain. I think rain is a good thing. I think we need rain, right? I am anti-flood. I am not against the rain. I am against flooding. Does being against flooding make you anti-rain? No. And being against mass migration does not make you anti-immigration, because mass migration is not immigration.

And beyond the issues of sovereignty and common sense and the costs involved—beyond all of that—do we really think that you can release 600,000 people with either criminal convictions or pending criminal charges into the country and nothing is going to happen? Do you think you can release 600,000 people with criminal histories and they are, all of a sudden, all going to become entrepreneurs and start some tech company? No. The chances are that a lot of them are going to continue to be criminals. You are going to have a crime wave. It is already starting, and no part of this country will be immune from it.

And do you think ISIS and, for that matter, every terrorist organization in the world, no matter what sewer they live in or some cave they are hiding in—you don’t think they are aware that the largest, most effective human smuggling operation in all of human history is operating right on the border of the United States? You don’t think they are aware of it? Because the guys

that were involved in 9/11—those animals, savages—they actually came here on a visa pretending to be flight students.

The next 9/11, God forbid, they don’t have to pretend anything. All they have to say is: I come from a country where people are kidnapped and where people are often victims of crime, and you must let me in. And, for all we know, some of them may actually become citizens because they are going to get asylum.

You don’t think that these terrorist groups are aware? I can’t and won’t divulge any intelligence information. So let’s just use common sense. Common sense tells you that these groups and these terrorist organizations understand that the largest human smuggling, migrant smuggling operation in the history of mankind operates right at border of the United States. And we don’t think anything is going to come out as a result of it?

Something bad is going to happen. Something bad—really bad—is bound to happen, and, when it does, remember this day, because, when it does, when something really bad happens, when we are overrun by a horrible crime wave and multiple cities—guys, we lived it.

I was a child. I actually didn’t live in Miami at the time. We had moved away for a few years. The Mariel boatlift brought 200,000—less than 200,000—people from Cuba all at once. It took Miami 10 years to dig out of that. Bill Clinton lost his reelection because he agreed to take in some of those people into a Federal facility in Arkansas, and they set it on fire.

And there are a lot of people who came through Mariel who did fine, and there were a bunch of criminals and sadists and lunatics as well, because you take a lot of people from anywhere, and you are going to have the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Well, we have something just like this happening not once, over a span of weeks, but, literally, every month we have two Mariels. And you think that you are going to allow a flood of people into America and something bad is not going to happen? Sadly, it is. It is just a matter of time. And when it does—when it does—things that might sound extreme to some aren’t just going to sound reasonable, they are going to sound overdue. And do you know what they are going to ask us? How could you have allowed this to happen?

So I end where I began. I know that if all you do is spend your time here and watch those networks and read these columnists and newspapers, you may lose this perspective; but I promise you, in the real world, on planet Earth, in this country among everyday people, most of them are asking themselves: Do you want to help Ukraine? We are for it. Do you want to help Israel? Of course. Yes, we should help Taiwan.

But who is helping America? Why isn’t helping our country deal with this migrant crisis No. 1 before those other

things? Don’t they tell you on the airplane, if the oxygen mask deploys, put on your mask and then put the one on your kid? What good are we, how do you suppose—America, to anyone in the world, to any country on this planet—if we are falling apart inside?

And then, who do we work for? We work for Americans. I am a U.S. citizen, a U.S. Senator. I care about things that are going on in the world. No one has ever accused me of being an isolationist. And those things do matter in America. But you have to start with fundamentals, and that means you have to be strong here at home in order to be strong for our allies.

We are being invaded every single day. Today, 8 to 10,000 people will enter the United States illegally and unlawfully. We don’t know who most of them are. Don’t let them tell you that they do. You can buy a fake passport. You can buy state travel documents in Brazil. In multiple countries in Latin America, you can buy them. It is an industry.

So I am just telling you, we are going to have something bad happen and people are going to ask: Why didn’t you guys fight over that? Why didn’t you stay over the weekend about that?

So why are we focused on an invasion of another country—which is important—but not focused on the invasion of our own country?

And it can be solved. The President’s executive orders created it, and he can reverse it, but he won’t. So here we are. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from Indiana.

TRIBUTE TO ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Mr. YOUNG. Madam President, as a Senator from the State of Indiana, I just can’t let February pass without offering a tribute to one of our State’s favorite sons, Abraham Lincoln.

As we approach his birthday, we celebrate how Lincoln’s story is perhaps the ultimate example of American opportunity. Lincoln spent the formative days of his childhood in the Hoosier wilderness, and he ultimately rose from the humblest of circumstances: a log cabin all the way up to the White House.

As President, he helped preserve our Union and end slavery, setting a course so that all Americans, regardless of race or circumstances, could follow his upwards path. Lincoln challenged America to honor the promise in its Declaration of Independence, that all men are created equal. And he reminds us still today that if we fail to do so, government by consent of the governed cannot long endure.

I think all of us here in the U.S. Senate today can attest these are difficult times. We face all sorts of challenges, foreign and domestic; and therefore, our politics are difficult. But I would argue—and I do so here today—that the politics we are facing today aren’t nearly as difficult as those that Abraham Lincoln faced.

During a week like this, where passions run high, we have had numerous

debates behind closed doors and on this floor, we should keep perspective, and we should avoid dramatic comparisons and take dire predictions with a grain of salt.

But concern about the national discourse which informs our political system is indeed well founded. Dialogue between Americans so essential to the maintenance of a democratic republic has coarsened and reached the point that at times, it scarcely resembles conversation. This form of estrangement leads to hurt feelings, separateness, civil dysfunction. And my fear and what brings me down to this floor—not just to honor a great man—I fear that this portends much worse divisions moving forward.

Abraham Lincoln knew this. He understood this dynamic. Decades before the Civil War, he identified a remedy in an address that upset the residents of Springfield, IL. You see, 19th century America was awash with passionate reform movements, much like today, in the great American tradition. Many of their followers sought to cure societal ills with great zeal and commitment.

One example was the temperance movement—sort of a dated term—but the temperance movement was a campaign against drinking the “demon rum,” alcoholic beverages. On February 22, 1842, the 110th anniversary of George Washington’s birthday, Abraham Lincoln spoke to a gathering of reformers at Springfield’s Second Presbyterian Church, as part of a temperance festival. It must have been a grand old time.

Lincoln was 33 years old. He was a member of Illinois’ House of Representatives. And as he later said, he was “an old line Whig.” It was a political party whose base, to borrow a modern term, included members of social reform movements. But Lincoln did not use this occasion to curry favor with his base. No. Instead, Abraham Lincoln offered advice that is still relevant to us today.

The invitation to speak came from Springfield’s chapter of the Washingtonian Temperance Society. This organization was founded 2 years prior in Baltimore by six friends, all recovering alcoholics. In a short period of time, the Washingtonians started a revolution in treating addiction. The society’s numbers quickly swelled just a few years after its founding. Chapters spread across the country, into the frontier.

In the Washingtonians’ success, Lincoln recognized a particular means of building coalitions and addressing intractable problems. At its core was something especially relevant, I would argue, in our era of addiction by subtraction, as he put it, “persuasion”—“... persuasion, kind, unassuming persuasion.”

Previous efforts to curb alcoholism, you see, as Lincoln recounted, were often self-righteous in their nature—perhaps that characterization sounds familiar to some when we reflect on

the current discourse—self-righteous in their nature and impractical in their demands. Lest I sound quaint, that rings a bit true to me when we reflect on present-day Washington and the debates we sometimes have on this floor.

The Washingtonian’s approach and expectations differed, and that is why they were successful. They damned the drink but not the drinker. Their cure, such as it was, was based in compassion, based in understanding, not condemnation. They saw a fellow citizen suffering from the disease as a friend in need of help, not a helpless sinner.

Lincoln contrasted the approach and effect of the Washingtonians with their predecessors, the older reformers. The older reformers, Lincoln recalled, communicated “in the thundering tones of anathema and denunciation.”

Now, we are all, no matter our political persuasion, familiar with those “thundering tones.” The truth is, we are all guilty. We are all guilty of those “thundering tones” from time to time. And perhaps, from time to time, those thundering tones are appropriate and necessary, and they have a great deal of impact when used sparingly. We are all guilty from time to time, forgetting that we are erring men and women.

But Lincoln suggested a gentler alternative: “It is an old and a true maxim,” he reasoned, “that a ‘drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall.’” That is how the Hoosier put it.

It is that drop of honey, Lincoln continued, which draws men and women to our sides, convinces them we are indeed friends. Friends—this from one of the most intelligent, successful, effective, polemicist debaters, litigators, and politicians in all of human history; he regarded his opponents as friends.

And this, in his words, is “the great highroad” to their reason:

[W]hen once gained, you will find but little trouble in convincing his judgment of the justice of your cause, if indeed that cause really be a just one.

Some Lincolnian humanity mixed in with age-old wisdom.

Now, across our politics and in our media, we seem so convinced sometimes of our justness, of our cause, that it has become in vogue to cancel—a modern term, “cancel”—the other side and chase away those on our own who do not see them, that other side, as enemies—tribalism, unleashed.

Where does this tribalistic impulse to cancel and ostracize lead us? It is an easy way to get booked on television these days. It is guaranteed to increase the number of social media followers you have. It might even rile up a rally or a crowd from time to time. But Abraham Lincoln, before the age of social media, predicted exactly where this would lead us.

Deem a fellow citizen a foe “to be shunned and despised, and he will retreat within himself, close all the avenues to his head and his heart . . .”—it is human nature and, therefore, un-

changed and unchangeable. “Such is man,” he continued, “and so must he be understood by those who would lead him, even to his own best interest.”

Abraham Lincoln believed that the American Revolution defied human history by proving men and women capable of governing themselves. Our original birth of freedom led to the design of a republic, a republic in which citizens decide what is in their best interest. Determining it often requires passionate, loud, angry debates properly circumscribed by a social, moral, ethical framework. It includes a balance with generous measures of trust and understanding. An absence of this balance gives way to discord, and that discord makes us all weaker—collectively weaker, even individually weaker.

On the surface, Lincoln’s speech in 1842 was about a means of combating alcoholism and achieving reforms. Look deeper, though. Its passages still today illustrate how we can continue to prove history wrong together. Remember—remember the power of reason even in our most passionate arguments. Find the empathy to form a bridge to our estranged countrymen—they are out there—and allow forbearance toward those among them we may disagree with—forbearance.

Abraham Lincoln relied on these values throughout his career even in America’s darkest hour. They remain vital to our national harmony and to our common good. So, as we mark the occasion of Lincoln’s birthday in 2024, we should call on these values once again.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. Will the Senator withhold his request.

Mr. YOUNG. Yes.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, let me start by thanking my friend and colleague from Indiana for providing those wise words and good examples from Abraham Lincoln.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Madam President, I come to the floor today to discuss the National Security Act, which has many important components, including support for Ukraine, for Israel, and for countries in the Indo-Pacific, as well as humanitarian assistance to help respond to crises around the world, including in Ukraine, in Gaza, the West Bank, Sudan, and elsewhere. It also includes funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to better protect those nonprofits here in the United States, including places of worship, that face elevated risks from hate crimes.

I have spoken many times on this floor about the imperative of providing the people of Ukraine with more desperately needed military assistance to protect their sovereignty and to protect their democracy. We must not abandon them to Putin’s brutal onslaught. The Ukrainian people are putting their blood and their lives on the

line to defend their freedom. The least we can do—the least we can do—is provide them, together with our allies, with the weapons and other support they need to do that.

It is not only the freedom of Ukraine that is at stake; abandoning the people of Ukraine to Putin would destroy our credibility with our allies and our adversaries. It would undermine our word with both friend and foe not only in Europe but around the world.

Let there be no doubt that President Xi is keeping one eye on what happens in Ukraine as he keeps the other eye trained on Taiwan.

To my Senate colleagues, you cannot say that you want to deter President Xi from attempting the forcible takeover of Taiwan if you are prepared to wave the white flag in the face of Putin's aggression. You can't say you are tough on China if you are weak on Russia and Putin.

This bill also provides important security assistance to partners in the Indo-Pacific region to protect their sovereignty and support our common vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. As the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific, I have worked hard on a bipartisan basis to advance that goal.

Today, I want to focus the remainder of my remarks on the provisions in the supplemental to provide more U.S. security assistance to Israel.

The horror of the October 7 Hamas terror attacks against Israel cannot, must not, and will not be erased or forgotten. About 1,200 people were brutally murdered, and 240 people were taken hostage. As I have said many times in the aftermath of that heinous attack and those kidnappings, Israel not only has the right but the duty to defend itself and take the actions necessary to prevent any future October 7's. Never forget and never again.

I stand steadfastly with the people of Israel in pursuing that objective and securing the release of all the hostages. Given the terrible news of the deaths of as many as one-fifth of the remaining hostages, the urgency of bringing the rest home could not be more clear.

I also believe that, while it is a just war, a just war must still be fought justly. As President Biden, Secretary Blinken, Secretary Austin, and many others have repeated, how a war is conducted matters. It matters for both moral and strategic reasons.

As Americans, we remember the collective anguish we experienced after the 9/11 terror attacks. We are also acutely aware of the unintended consequences of strategic overreach stemming from shared anger and pain. These were important lessons—lessons that apply today.

We all recognize that Hamas's despicable tactic of operating from among the civilian population makes it more difficult to target the enemy, but that does not absolve the Netanyahu government of the duty to take necessary measures to avoid civilian casualties.

That is why, back on December 2 of last year, Secretary Austin said:

Protecting Palestinian civilians in Gaza is both a moral responsibility and a strategic one.

Those sentiments were echoed by Secretary Blinken in December of last year when he said that it is "imperative that Israel put a premium on civilian protection." The Secretary of State has emphasized that point repeatedly since then.

Nor does the horror of the October 7 attack justify the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza—a catastrophe that began when the Netanyahu government imposed a total siege on the people in that very narrow strip of land, and that has continued as his coalition places unnecessary obstacles in the way of getting vital, desperately needed, life-saving assistance to innocent civilians there.

Over 2 million Palestinian civilians, who have nothing to do with Hamas, are on the verge of starvation and need help to survive. That is why Secretary Blinken has emphasized the importance of getting "more humanitarian assistance to people who so desperately need it in Gaza." The situation is awful, and it is getting worse by the day.

To those who say that all this aid is being diverted to Hamas, let me just say that is factually untrue, and I want to read a statement I received not that long ago from Ambassador Satterfield, who is our humanitarian coordinator in charge of humanitarian assistance to Gaza.

His statement reads:

Today, I have not received any allegations, evidence, or reports of any incidents of Hamas diversion or theft of U.S. or other assistance or fuel from U.N.-delivered assistance from any of our partners or from the Government of Israel since the humanitarian assistance resumed in Gaza on October 21st.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that his full statement be printed in the RECORD.

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

#### SATTERFIELD STATEMENT

To date, I have not received any allegations, evidence or reports of any incidence of Hamas diversion or theft of U.S. or other assistance or fuel from UN delivered assistance from any of our partners or from the Government of Israel since humanitarian assistance resumed in Gaza October 21.

I have received reports of several incidents of UN and Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) aid trucks being taken for immediate consumption by vulnerable civilians in Gaza, my understanding based on direct conversations with the UN is that these recent incidents are not due to systemic or directed diversion by Hamas but rather undertaken by desperate communities that are experiencing a grave level of scarcity, under threat of constant kinetic operations, and have been displaced, in some cases multiple times.

While my team and I are routinely in touch with the UN on aid assistance delivery and have asked that they report any indications of Hamas-directed diversion to the U.S., we do not have the same visibility on the distribution of aid consigned from the

Egyptian Red Crescent to PRCS for onward delivery in Gaza. We can provide further context in a briefing.

We continue to have conversations with COGAT and the UN on the looting and diversion risks in Gaza and have asked them to alert us should there be evidence of Hamas-directed diversion of assistance. All humanitarian assistance in Gaza is reviewed, inspected, and monitored by COGAT. Our teams in Israel and Washington, D.C. continue to engage with the Israeli government on this matter.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Unfortunately, the Biden administration's urgent pleas have mostly fallen on deaf ears with Netanyahu's coalition. Just a few days ago, we saw Secretary Blinken in Jerusalem, meeting with Prime Minister Netanyahu, urging that Israel not take military action in Rafah.

What is Rafah? Rafah is a city in Gaza that is right on the Egyptian-Gaza border. Before the war started, there were about 300,000, 400,000 people in Rafah. Today, you have about 1.4 million people crammed into Rafah because over a million people who have been displaced from other parts of Gaza went to Rafah because they were told it was a safe place to go.

Despite what Secretary Blinken said and despite the fact that just the other day, John Kirby, the national security spokesman, said that the United States would not support a major military operation in Rafah—nevertheless, within hours of Secretary Blinken's meeting with the Prime Minister, Prime Minister Netanyahu said that they are going to go into Rafah. It is just one of many, many examples of where our requests have been rebuffed.

We have made some incremental progress from time to time. For example, after many, many requests and urgings, we saw a while back the long-delayed reopening of the Kerem Shalom crossing to allow some more trucks into Gaza. But the reality is that the number of trucks and the amount of aid getting into Gaza is nowhere near what is necessary to meet the dire humanitarian situation.

Here we are 4 months into this war, and over 27,000 Palestinians have been killed, over two-thirds of them women and children, and that does not include those who are still buried beneath the rubble.

Wes Bryant, who helped lead the U.S. targeting against ISIS, has written about the unacceptably high levels of civilian casualties in Gaza.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that his op-ed be printed in the RECORD.

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

#### I LED STRIKE CELLS AGAINST ISIS—ISRAEL'S STRIKE CAMPAIGN IN GAZA IS UNACCEPTABLE

Nearly three months into Israel's war in Gaza, the casualty data that has emerged is deeply troubling to me as an expert in close air support and targeting.

Israel was wholly justified in responding to Hamas's inhuman attack on Oct. 7, 2023, in which the terror group tortured and gunned down hundreds of people and entire families.

But its aggressive campaign across the Gaza Strip has slain almost 22,000 people, up to 70 percent of whom have been women and children, with the majority of deaths attributed to Israeli airstrikes. If these figures are anywhere near accurate, civilian loss from Israel's strike campaign is completely at odds with the standards that my colleagues and I followed for years, including during major urban offensives against ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

I spent a career as a Joint Terminal Attack Controller (JTAC) in the U.S. Air Force—the airpower experts who coordinate and call in airstrikes. In 2014, I was a key member of the special operations response force sent to Baghdad to establish the strike cells that helped bring down the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. As a senior targeting professional, certified by the U.S. Central Command to conduct collateral damage estimation and analysis, safeguarding the civilian populace from airstrikes was a core aspect of my job. And while the United States may not be perfect in this realm, the reality is that the Israeli military has demonstrated a far higher tolerance for civilian casualties than the U.S. military, even when compared to our most sensitive operations.

In early December, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated that, thus far in the course of its campaign in Gaza, approximately two civilians had been killed for every Hamas fighter. IDF spokesperson Jonathan Conriscus defended that ratio on CNN, calling it “tremendously positive” in light of Hamas embedding itself within the civilian population.

A modern, first-world military should never view a 2:1 civilian-to-combatant death ratio as acceptable, let alone remotely “positive.”

This ratio exceeds that of the U.S. operation to destroy ISIS's de facto capital in Raqqa, Syria, which itself became a cautionary tale for civilian harm in dense urban fighting. There, airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition killed more than 1,600 civilians during months of bombardment, according to an Amnesty International report. The U.S. military has argued that Amnesty's civilian death for Raqqa is significantly overestimated and can be considered a worst-case approximation. Even so, given that Raqqa was the last ISIS stronghold in Syria and harbored thousands of ISIS fighters, we can assess a civilian casualty ratio nowhere near that of Israel's campaign in Gaza.

Yet the civilian casualty rates in Raqqa were still considered unacceptable by U.S. standards and became a significant driver of the Pentagon's civilian harm mitigation and response reforms. The differences between Israeli and American-led air wars goes further.

Nearly half of the munitions Israel has dropped in Gaza since Oct. 7 have been unguided bombs, and Israel has regularly used bombs weighing as much as 2,000 pounds within densely populated refugee encampments and near besieged hospitals. This is almost unheard of in U.S. airstrike planning.

First, refugee encampments and hospitals are protected sites within U.S. targeting methodology. Intentionally striking in, or even within close proximity to, these areas is almost never on the table.

Second, unguided bombs can miss their intended target by dozens of meters. The only time we used them was in areas with little possibility of civilians being present, such as to destroy a weapons cache.

Further, the size of most bombs we dropped in urban areas rarely exceeded 500 pounds—even then, we most often chose warheads with smaller blasts and less fragmentation that were designed to limit collateral damage.

And in all but the rarest of strike operations, my authorized threshold for risk of civilian casualties was zero, meaning that strikes would not be approved if there was risk of even one civilian being killed. The IDF continually carries out strikes in locations where high risk of civilian death is well understood.

The justifications Israeli officials have offered for high civilian casualties include Hamas's use of civilians as involuntary human shields. However, in U.S. strike operations, such excuses are never an option. Regardless of how the enemy is conducting itself—how embedded within the civilian populace they are or how many civilians they are intentionally surrounding themselves with—this never absolves us of the obligation to protect civilians.

Sadly, many U.S. defense analysts have nearly stepped over one another to legally and morally justify the high rates of civilian casualties in Gaza.

In an interview on CNN in December, a prominent defense analyst from the U.S. Military Academy irresponsibly insisted that the IDF strike campaign has been “proportional, very discriminate, very precise.” I can state, without reservation, that it simply has not shown any of these qualities.

Just one example of what has, unfortunately, become many in the course of Israel's strike campaign in Gaza includes the IDF's deliberate and continued targeting within densely populated refugee camps, even while knowing that these areas have not been successfully evacuated by civilians. Such strikes demonstrate far from any level of discrimination and precision that I was expected to exercise as a U.S. targeting professional.

I can recount watching our enemies maneuver in real time, or tracking a terrorist cell for weeks to a specific location, yet not being able to strike because we assessed that civilians were potentially within the strike radius. Although it is frustrating to be constrained from striking an enemy when we see him plainly in our sights—this is the humane way to conduct warfare. It is one of the major qualities that separates us from our enemies and, importantly, it is what the international law of armed conflict was created for.

Since October, members of the Biden administration—including President Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin—have repeatedly spoken against Israel's strike campaign, acknowledging the devastating scale of civilian loss in Gaza. Yet the administration has, thus far, failed to effect any meaningful change on the part of Israel's strike operations, and continues to send arms and munitions. Israel is the top recipient of U.S. foreign military aid, receiving \$3.3 billion annually, including the supply of air-to-ground munitions used in their strike campaign.

This is a conversation that must be had, as our actions demonstrate that we are complicit in the massive civilian toll in Gaza. And this carries strategic, legal and moral considerations. In my career hunting America's enemies with airstrikes, it was my job to be calculated and precise in targeting our enemies while being compassionate and vigilant in safeguarding the civilian populace. We can stand by Israel's right to defend its homeland, and the necessity to defeat Hamas, while also doing far more to influence change in its targeting and strike operations in Gaza.

A call for the humanitarian revision of the military actions of Israel is no more antisemitic than valuing Palestinian civilian lives is pro-Hamas. This overriding rhetoric is the definition of logical fallacy, and only blinds us.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. It is not only the extremely high civilian death toll; it is the over 67,000 wounded, the over 1.7 million displaced. It is the huge damage to civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, mosques, and churches. It is the toll from humanitarian aid workers killed and journalists killed. The level of death and destruction in Gaza is simply inhumane.

For just one small but still powerful example, I urge my colleagues to read the Washington Post story from last Friday—a week ago—about a 6-year old girl, Hind Hamada, who is trying to get to safety in a car with her aunt, her uncle, and her five young cousins. The car was hit by tank fire, and all of those who were in the car with Hind died. She was severely injured. She got on a phone to try to call for help, and there are recordings of her calls for help as her family members lay dead around her in the car. The last recording on the phone call she made to paramedics who were unable to reach her were:

Come and take me.

She was killed.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD.

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

A 6-YEAR-OLD IN GAZA CITY WAS CALLING TO BE RESCUED. DID ANYONE FIND HER?

The Hamada family was trying to get to safety. An order from the Israeli military had gone out earlier last Monday, ordering them to evacuate their neighborhood in Gaza City. Bashar, 44, and his wife Anam, 43, piled their children and their young niece, Hind, into the car.

They would never reach their destination. The full picture of the tragedy that befell the family remains incomplete. Some details could not be confirmed. What is beyond dispute is that their car came under fire; the parents and most of the children were killed; a 6-year-old girl begged for hours to be rescued; paramedics were dispatched; then communications were lost.

The Washington Post reconstructed the events of that day by interviewing three family members, five members of the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and reviewing audio of phone conversations between dispatchers and children in the car. The family's story is emblematic of the ongoing dangers faced by civilians in northern Gaza—even as Israel says it is winding down its military mission there—and the depth of their isolation from the outside world.

Asked for comment multiple times, the Israel Defense Forces said, “We are unfamiliar with the incident described.” The Post provided specific coordinates and additional details to the IDF on Tuesday morning and has not received a reply.

In the operations room of the PRCS in Ramallah, the landline was ringing. It was 2:28 p.m. Omar al-Qam, the lone dispatcher on duty that day, picked up.

From 2,000 miles away, in Frankfurt, Germany came the steady voice of Mohammed Salem Hamada: “My family members are trapped in Gaza City,” he told Omar. “They were driving a black Kia Picanto and the car was targeted. Some of the people were killed inside.”

Mohammed gave Omar the phone number for his 15-year-old niece, Layan, who had

called her uncle in southern Gaza to sound the alarm. The uncle, struggling with patchy cell service, called his cousin in Germany, hoping he could find help.

The uncle relayed what Layan had told him: The Israeli army had opened fire on the family's car. Her parents and all four of her siblings were dead—Sana, 13, Raghad, 12, Mohammed, 11 and 4-year-old Sarah.

Layan told her uncle she was bleeding. And that her cousin Hind, 6, was the only other survivor.

Omar, in Ramallah, called Layan. She sounded terrified.

"They are firing at us," she screamed into the phone. "The tank is next to me."

"Are you hiding?" he asked.

Then came a burst of fire. Layan screamed. The line went dead.

In shock, Omar said he went to find his colleague, Rana Faqih, in another room. He was trembling, she recalled.

Rana said she walked him back to his chair in the dispatch room and stood next to him as he dialed again.

It was Hind who answered this time.

"Are you in the car now?" he asked her.

"Yes," came the small voice on the other end.

Rana took the phone, telling the 6-year-old she would stay on the phone until help arrived. Hind's voice was so quiet, it was impossible to make out her reply.

"Who are you with?" Rana asked.

"With my family," Hind told her.

Rana asked if she had tried to wake up her family. Hind responded: "I'm telling you they're dead."

Rana asked her how the car had been hit.

"A tank," Hind said. "The tank is next to me . . . it's coming towards me . . . it's very, very close." Rana's voice was strong and clear and reassuring. Hind's was faint and shaky. Rana urged her to keep talking. They prayed together. Rana read to her from the Quran.

Don't cry, she told the little girl, though Rana was also fighting back tears.

"Don't be scared," she told Hind. "They're not going to hurt you . . . Don't leave the car."

Minutes passed. Hind appeared to drop the phone. The silences were longer now.

"If I could get you out I would," Rana said. "We're trying our very best."

Rana was crying now, but tried to keep her voice steady.

"Please come get me," Hind said. Again and again: "Come get me."

There was a distant rumble of fire in the background.

"Come get me," Hind repeated.

Rana, 37, has been working in Crisis and Disaster Management with PRCS since 2009. She had faced situations like this before, she said, but never with a girl so young.

Her colleagues had located the car in a neighborhood near Al-Azhar University. Getting an ambulance there, inside a closed military zone, would require permission from the IDF. It was a process that involved multiple agencies, communicating on unreliable phone lines. The dispatchers knew it could take hours.

"We have received hundreds of calls from people who are trapped," said Nebal Farsakh, a spokesperson for PRCS. "People just want help evacuating. Unfortunately we do not have safe access."

Operators told The Post they reached out around 3 p.m. to the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Ramallah, which coordinates the safe passage of paramedics with COGAT—an arm of the Israeli Defense Ministry. Fathi Abu Warda, an adviser at the Palestinian Ministry of Health, confirmed receiving a green light from COGAT to send an ambulance to the area. COGAT did not respond to

questions from The Post, referring them to the IDF.

The operators said they tried to stay focused on Hind. Nisreen Qawwas, 56, the head of PRCS's mental health department, took the lead.

"She practiced deep breathing exercises with us, and I told her we would be with her, second by second," Nisreen recalled.

But Hind began to grow distant, Nisreen said, and hung up multiple times, growing frustrated that no one had come for her.

Eventually, operators said they reached Hind's mother, who was sheltering elsewhere in Gaza City, and patched her into the call.

"Her mother's voice made a real difference," Nisreen said. "Every moment she said to her mother, 'I miss you momma.'"

Her mother told her, "You will be with me in a little while and I will hug you," Nisreen remembered.

The Post was not able to reach Hind's mother in Gaza City, where there is limited connectivity.

At 5:40 p.m.—three hours after the phone had first rung in Ramallah—the dispatchers said they got a call back from the Palestinian Ministry of Health. The ministry told them they had received permission to send paramedics to Hind. Israeli authorities had provided a map for them to follow. PRCS dispatched the nearest ambulance, 1.8 miles away, to the scene with two paramedics.

Nisreen said she tried to keep Hind engaged. They talked about the sea and the sun and her favorite chocolate cake.

But everyone could tell the little girl was fading. She said her hand was bleeding, that there was blood on her body. It was dark now. She was hungry, thirsty and cold, she told her mother.

Dispatchers said the paramedics radioed in as they neared the vehicle. The team in Ramallah encouraged them to move forward, slowly, Nisreen said.

At that moment, dispatchers said, there was "heavy gunfire." The line with Hind was lost. Hind's last sentence, Omar said, was "Come and take me."

That was at 7 p.m. last Monday, a full week ago. There has been no word from Hind or the ambulance crew since.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. On the humanitarian front, millions of Palestinian civilians are desperately trying to cling to life as we speak here. I have met with the leaders of international humanitarian organizations who have operated in conflict zones around the world for decades and for decades. Every one of them—every one—has stated that their organizations have never—never—experienced a humanitarian disaster as dire and terrible as the world is witnessing in Gaza.

That is why 5 weeks ago, Senator MERKLEY and I traveled to the Rafah border crossing between Egypt and Gaza to see for ourselves what was happening, to talk to people on the ground.

What we saw and learned indicated that Palestinians—Palestinian civilians—are on the verge of starvation; that injured children are having their limbs amputated without anesthesia; that sewage continues to spill into the streets and contaminate the water supplies; and health officials are warning of the imminent outbreak of cholera and other diseases. Diseases like dysentery are already rampant, especially in kids.

That is why last week, 25 U.S. Senators wrote to President Biden urging

the administration to do more to push the Netanyahu coalition to allow more desperately needed assistance to reach innocent civilians in Gaza. We outlined five specific measures that need to be taken immediately.

That was not the first time many of us wrote to President Biden to express our concerns about the conduct of the war in Gaza. We wrote to the President over 3 months ago, posing a series of questions, including what mechanisms are in place to ensure that U.S.-provided equipment is used in accordance with international humanitarian law? We did that because the United States is not a bystander in this conflict.

Israel is the largest annual recipient of U.S. security assistance, totaling more than \$39 billion over the last 10 years alone. And right now, bombs and artillery made in America and paid for by Americans are being used in Gaza. So the U.S. Government and the U.S. Senate has an obligation to the American people to ensure that their tax dollars, our tax dollars, are used in the manner that aligns with our values and aligns with our interests.

That is why 19 Senators filed an amendment to the National Security Act, the supplemental national security provision that is before the Senate now and soon will be considered. That is why we filed an amendment to ensure that all recipients of U.S. military assistance in that bill—whether Ukraine, whether Israel, or whether it is one of our East Asian partners—use these U.S. taxpayer dollars in line with our values and our interests.

Our amendment is designed to create an accountability structure to ensure that countries that receive U.S. security assistance promise to adhere to humanitarian law and other applicable law.

It is designed to ensure that recipients of U.S. assistance promise to help facilitate and not arbitrarily restrict the delivery of U.S.-supported humanitarian assistance in conflict zones.

And our amendment included a provision to maintain accountability by requiring reporting be presented and provided to the Congress on whether or not the recipients of U.S. military assistance were, in fact, complying with those commitments on international law and allowing humanitarian aid to flow to conflict zones.

Importantly, the reporting requirements in our amendment also require information and an assessment about whether recipient countries—countries receiving U.S. military aid—are employing best practices to prevent civilian harm.

That is what our amendment does. We filed that amendment to this bill just a few days ago. In the meantime, since we first proposed this amendment in December, we have remained in regular communication with the Biden administration.



I want to thank all of my colleagues who cosponsored this amendment, including the original cosponsors—Senator Kaine, Senator Durbin, and Senator Schatz—but also the 15 other colleagues, including the Presiding Officer who joined together in this effort to call for an amendment that made sure that we better align our military assistance with our values.

Our amendment applied these requirements to every country receiving military assistance in the supplemental national security bill, but our intention all along has been to expand this worldwide, to make sure that as the United States uses taxpayer dollars to provide security assistance to countries around the world, that we can tell those taxpayers that their money is being used and the military equipment purchased with their money is being used in a manner consistent with our values.

We began that conversation with the President's team at the White House. We had a chance to talk with them about our goals and the purposes of the amendment.

At the time we introduced this amendment, we said our goal is to get these provisions implemented, whether through amendment or through other means.

I want to salute the President of the United States—President Biden—because just last night, at 8:30 p.m., the President issued a historic national security memorandum, National Security Memorandum No. 20.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have that printed in the RECORD.

**NATIONAL SECURITY MEMORANDUM ON SAFEGUARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITH RESPECT TO TRANSFERRED DEFENSE ARTICLES AND DEFENSE SERVICES**

As outlined in National Security Memorandum 18 of February 23, 2023 (United States Conventional Arms Transfer Policy) (NSM-18), supporting foreign partners of the United States through appropriate transfers of defense articles by the Department of State and the Department of Defense is a critical tool for advancing United States foreign policy and national security objectives, including to:

(a) strengthen the collective security of the United States and its allies and partners by enhancing interoperability and supporting United States-led diplomacy in building and maintaining international coalitions;

(b) promote international peace and stability, and help allies and partners deter and defend themselves against aggression and foreign malign influence;

(c) strengthen United States national security by reinforcing respect for human rights, international humanitarian law, democratic governance, and the rule of law;

(d) prevent arms transfers that risk facilitating or otherwise contributing to violations of human rights or international humanitarian law; and

(e) strengthen ally and partner capacity to respect their obligations under international law and reduce the risk of civilian harm, including through appropriate tools, training, advising, and institutional capacity-building efforts that accompany arms transfers. Equally critical is ensuring that adequate

safeguards and accountability exist with respect to transferred defense articles and defense services. Under the Arms Export Control Act (22 U.S.C. 2751, et seq.), both the Department of State and the Department of Defense implement end-use monitoring programs.

In addition, as a matter of policy, the United States always seeks to promote adherence to international law and encourages other states and partners to do the same. United States policy, including as reflected in Executive Order 13732 of July 1, 2016 (United States Policy on Pre- and Post-Strike Measures to Address Civilian Casualties in U.S. Operations Involving the Use of Force), is for executive departments and agencies to engage with foreign partners to share and learn best practices for reducing the likelihood of and responding to civilian casualties, including through appropriate training and assistance. In order to effectively implement certain obligations under United States law, the United States must maintain an appropriate understanding of foreign partners' adherence to international law, including, as applicable, international human rights law and international humanitarian law. As a matter of international law, the United States looks to the law of state responsibility and United States partners' compliance with international humanitarian law in assessing the lawfulness of United States military assistance to, and joint operations with, military partners.

For these reasons, I am issuing this memorandum, which requires the Secretary of State to obtain certain credible and reliable written assurances from foreign governments receiving defense articles and, as appropriate, defense services, from the Departments of State and Defense, and requires the Secretaries of State and Defense to provide periodic congressional reports to enable meaningful oversight. In addition to the requirements of this memorandum, the Secretaries of State and Defense are responsible for ensuring that all transfers of defense articles and defense services by the Departments of State and Defense under any security cooperation or security assistance authorities are conducted in a manner consistent with all applicable international and domestic law and policy, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, the applicable "Leahy Law" (22 U.S.C. 2378d, 10 U.S.C. 362), and NSM-18.

Section 1. Policy. (a) Except as provided below, the policy outlined in this memorandum applies prospectively to the provision to foreign governments by the Departments of State or Defense of any defense articles funded with congressional appropriations under their respective security assistance and security cooperation authorities, including with Foreign Military Financing and Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative funds, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 333, and pursuant to Presidential drawdown authority under section 506 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2318). Prior to the Departments of State or Defense providing such defense articles to the recipient country and, as applicable, consistent with the timelines set out in subsection (c) of this section, the Secretary of State shall:

(i) obtain credible and reliable written assurances from a representative of the recipient country as the Secretary of State deems appropriate that the recipient country will use any such defense articles in accordance with international humanitarian law and, as applicable, other international law; and

(ii) in furtherance of supporting section 6201 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2378-1) and applicable international law, obtain credible and reliable written as-

surances from a representative of the recipient country as the Secretary of State deems appropriate that, in any area of armed conflict where the recipient country uses such defense articles, consistent with applicable international law, the recipient country will facilitate and not arbitrarily deny, restrict, or otherwise impede, directly or indirectly, the transport or delivery of United States humanitarian assistance and United States Government-supported international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance.

The assurances described in this subsection shall be enforceable consistent with subsection (b) of this section.

(b) Upon an assessment by the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense that the credibility or reliability of assurances provided by the recipient country as required by subsection (a) of this section has been called into question and should be revisited, the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense, as appropriate, shall report to the President, through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, within 45 days of such assessment and shall indicate appropriate next steps to be taken to assess and remediate the situation. Such remediation could include actions from refreshing the assurances to suspending any further transfers of defense articles or, as appropriate, defense services.

(c) Recognizing that a reasonable period of time is necessary to obtain the assurances required by subsection (a) of this section from foreign governments already receiving such defense articles from the Departments of State or Defense as of the date of this memorandum, the Secretary of State shall obtain the required assurances from those countries within the following time periods:

(i) For any country to which subsection (a) of this section applies and that is deemed by the Secretary of State to be engaged, as of the date of this memorandum, in an active armed conflict in which defense articles covered by this section are used, the Secretary of State shall obtain the assurances outlined in subsection (a) of this section not later than 45 days after the date of this memorandum and shall provide an update to the President, through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, regarding the recipient countries that have provided such assurances. If the Secretary of State does not obtain such assurances within 45 days of the date of this memorandum, the transfer of defense articles and, as applicable, defense services, shall be paused until the required assurances are obtained.

(ii) For any country to which subsection (a) of this section applies and that is not deemed by the Secretary of State to be engaged, as of the date of this memorandum, in an active armed conflict in which defense articles covered by this section are used, the Secretary of State shall obtain the assurances outlined in subsection (a) of this section not later than 180 days after the date of this memorandum and shall provide an update to the President, through the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, regarding the recipient countries that have provided such assurances. If the Secretary of State does not obtain such assurances within 180 days of the date of this memorandum, the transfer of defense articles and, as applicable, defense services, shall be paused until the required assurances are obtained.

(d) This memorandum does not apply to (1) air defense systems; (2) other defense articles or defense services that are intended to be used for strictly defensive purposes or are exclusively for non-lethal purposes other than in armed conflict; (3) defense articles or defense services that are non-lethal in nature; or (4) transfers strictly for the operational needs of the Department of Defense.



(e) This memorandum shall apply to the provision to foreign governments by the Departments of State or Defense of any defense services the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense determines to be appropriate under their respective authorities in furthering the aims of the policy outlined in this memorandum.

(f) In rare and extraordinary circumstances justified by an imperative associated with the national security of the United States, and with concurrent notification to the President, including an articulation of the relevant justification, the Secretary of State or the Secretary of Defense may waive the requirements of this section. Such waiver should be as limited in time, scope, and nature as deemed necessary to advance the interests of United States national security.

Sec. 2. Congressional Reporting. (a) Not later than 90 days after the date of this memorandum, and once every fiscal year thereafter, the Secretaries of State and Defense shall report in written form and, to the extent additionally appropriate, through verbal briefings by appropriate senior officials of their respective departments, to the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives; and, upon request, other congressional national security committees as appropriate. The written report shall address defense articles and, as appropriate, defense services, provided by the Departments of State or Defense described in subsections 1(a) and 1(e) of this memorandum, and shall include:

(i) any new assurances obtained since the prior report;

(ii) an assessment of any credible reports or allegations that such defense articles and, as appropriate, defense services, have been used in a manner not consistent with international law, including international humanitarian law; such assessment shall include any determinations, if they can reasonably be made, as to whether use has occurred in a manner not consistent with international law, and if so, whether the recipient country has pursued appropriate accountability;

(iii) a description of the procedures used to make the assessment described in subsection (a)(ii) of this section;

(iv) an assessment and analysis of (1) any credible reports indicating that the use of such defense articles and, as appropriate, defense services, has been found to be inconsistent with established best practices for mitigating civilian harm, including practices that have been adopted by the United States military, and including measures implemented in response to the Department of Defense's Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan or incidents reviewed pursuant to the Department of State's Civilian Harm Incident Response Guidance; and (2) the extent to which efforts to induce effective implementation of such civilian harm mitigation best practices have been incorporated into the relevant United States security assistance program;

(v) a description of the procedures used to make the assessment and analysis described in subsection (iv) of this section;

(vi) a description of any known occurrences of such defense articles and, as appropriate, defense services, not being received by the recipient foreign government that is the intended recipient, or being misused for purposes inconsistent with the intended purposes, and a description of any remedies undertaken;

(vii) an assessment and analysis of whether each foreign government recipient has abid-

ed by the assurances received pursuant to section 1(a)(ii) of this memorandum, whether such recipient is in compliance with section 6201 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2378-1), and whether such recipient has fully cooperated with United States Government efforts and United States Government-supported international efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in an area of armed conflict where the recipient country is using such defense articles and, as appropriate, defense services; and

(viii) a description of any challenges to conducting the assessment and analysis described in subsections (a)(i)-(vii) of this section, including whether or not there is available information responsive to the subsections above.

(b) The written report and, where applicable, accompanying verbal briefing provided under subsection (a) of this section shall be unclassified but may be supplemented, to the extent necessary, with classified reporting as appropriate for the protection of classified national security information.

(c) The first report provided under this section shall include available information on the use, since January 2023, of defense articles and, as appropriate, defense services, provided by the Departments of State or Defense described in subsections 1(a) and 1(e) of this memorandum by recipient countries that engaged in armed conflict during calendar year 2023.

(d) The Secretaries of State and Defense shall notify the congressional committees specified in subsection (a) of this section within 7 days following any report provided to the President pursuant to section 1(b) of this memorandum and within 7 days following any notification provided to the President of the exercise of a waiver pursuant to section 1(f) of this memorandum, and shall notify the same committees of assurances newly received pursuant to section 1(a) of this memorandum within 30 days of receiving such assurances if not otherwise reported to the Congress within that time period.

Sec. 3. Definitions. For purposes of this memorandum, the terms "defense article" and "defense service" have the meanings given in section 47 of the Arms Export Control Act, 22 U.S.C. 2794.

Sec. 4. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof;

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(d) The requirements in this memorandum are not intended to reflect an understanding that they are required by treaty or customary international law, and this memorandum should not be understood or cited to that effect.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. What this national security memorandum does is effectively implement the terms of our amendment. It makes the provisions of that amendment effectively the law of the land and does other things as well.

I not only want to salute President Biden, I want to salute his National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, the entire NSC team, and the entire White House team for taking this very important, deliberate, historic action. It is a very big deal.

What does it do? As our amendment, it pushes forward in a number of big areas.

First, it requires that every recipient of U.S. military assistance promise in writing, before receiving that military assistance, that they will comply with international humanitarian law and, as applicable, other international law. They have to promise in writing to do that before the delivery of U.S. military assistance.

No. 2, it requires that every recipient of U.S. military assistance must promise in writing to facilitate and not to arbitrarily restrict the delivery of U.S.-supported humanitarian assistance into conflict zones where U.S. weapons are being used by the recipient country. That promise also has to be made before the delivery of that military assistance.

And this national security memorandum has enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance and to make sure that the U.S. Government has the tools to take action in cases of noncompliance.

It focuses, in the first instance, on countries that are currently in armed conflict and using U.S. weapons. That would include Israel. It would include Ukraine. It would include other countries that today are using U.S. weapons in conflict zones.

And it indicates that if those countries do not make these assurances, make these promises within the next 45 days, U.S. security assistance will be suspended.

It also has a provision that says the Secretary of State will inform the President of the United States if there is any information that the recipient countries that have made these promises are not keeping those promises to the American people and the American taxpayer and when the Secretary of State makes such notification to the President, that Congress will be informed.

The national security memorandum also has the robust reporting requirements included in our proposed amendment to help monitor compliance with the promises made by the recipient countries. They are promises to use U.S. military assistance in accordance with international humanitarian law and other international law as applicable. They are promises to facilitate and not arbitrarily restrict the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The report will tell the Congress whether or not those countries are, in fact, doing those things and provide an assessment of what is happening.

The report will also include other provisions called for in our amendment. One of them, very importantly,

is that the report must assess and analyze whether or not the recipient countries that are engaged in armed conflict are deploying and using best practices to prevent civilian harm. Let me say that again. This report will require an assessment and analysis of whether countries that are receiving U.S. military assistance, engaged in armed conflict now, whether or not they are employing best practices to prevent civilian harm.

The national security memorandum prioritizes this reporting on countries that are currently using U.S. weapons in armed conflict. For those countries, the first report will be due in 90 days. Those countries include Ukraine, include Israel, and any other countries that are using U.S. weapons in armed conflict today.

And, very importantly, the reporting period that is covered will be a reporting timeframe starting January of 2023. So Congress will receive a report in 90 days on whether or not the recipients of U.S. military assistance are in compliance throughout last year and on into this year with those requirements set out in the national security memorandum requirements that we had in our amendment.

This really is a historic moment. This is a transformational moment in making sure we align U.S. security assistance with American values. It is a very sweeping memorandum.

As of 8:30 p.m. last night, it is the law of the land in the United States of America. It will give the President of the United States many more tools and more leverage to better ensure that countries that are using U.S. military assistance comply with the commitments they now have to make in writing—whether it is Ukraine, whether it is Israel, whether it is another country.

I spoke a little bit earlier about the fact that despite repeated requests from the Biden administration of the Netanyahu coalition to reduce the level of civilian casualties, to allow more humanitarian assistance into Gaza, that, for the most part, with some minor exceptions, those requests have fallen on deaf ears.

So we hope and believe and are quite confident that this national security memorandum, which adopts our amendment, will provide the President with the leverage, additional leverage needed to close that gap between our request and reality.

I urge the President and his team to make effective use of these new provisions.

(Ms. BALDWIN assumed the Chair.)

I urge the President's team to do that not just with respect to Israel but with any country that is receiving U.S. military assistance, because American taxpayers must be assured that the U.S. Government is doing everything in its power to make sure that as we provide assistance to partners around the world, that they are complying with their values and complying with the principles of adherence to inter-

national humanitarian law, international law, that they will help facilitate and not obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in desperate need.

I want to again thank all of the cosponsors of this amendment, because there were many people who opposed this amendment. But I never understood the opposition to the straightforward principles that U.S. taxpayer dollars and U.S. military assistance should go to countries that commit to us that they will use that help that we are providing in accordance with international humanitarian law and commit that if they are engaged in armed conflict using U.S. weapons, that they will support U.S. efforts and other U.S.-backed efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians who are caught up in the crossfire through no fault of their own.

These seem like very straightforward principles, and it is about time that we took what has previously really been the sentiment of the United States and turn it into substance, to take rhetoric and make it more of a reality.

So I want to thank all my colleagues, including the new Presiding Officer, who helped make that happen.

I want to thank the President of the United States. I want to thank President Biden, who has said from the beginning that the United States must continue to be a beacon of hope and that we must have a foreign policy based on values, based on the rule of law, based on human rights. If we want to do that, we need to make sure that our laws match those ambitions. We need to make sure that we have requirements on the books that achieve those aspirations because aspirations that are not backed up with real leverage are sound good, but they are not made real in the world we live in.

Thank you to all of the cosponsors to this amendment. Thank you to the President of the United States. This is an important new chapter in how the United States provides military assistance around the world and how we conduct our foreign policy, and I hope it will lead to a brighter chapter in the years ahead.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The senior Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass the important national security package that is in front of us. This will reaffirm our Nation's commitment to our partners across the globe.

Earlier this week, many of us felt very strongly that we should move forward on the combination of bills that

Senator LANKFORD, Senator MURPHY, and Senator SINEMA had negotiated. I strongly supported that bipartisan compromise and worked with them on a portion of the bill regarding our Afghan allies who had served with our troops, and I was really impressed by the thorough nature of their negotiations.

We know how important that bill was for our own national security. It would have given the President emergency authority to shut down the border when our border agents are overwhelmed. It would have made changes to our asylum system. It would have addressed processing issues and backlogs. It would have actually expanded legal immigration for things like work permits and visas.

I am grateful that the package we are considering today does include the bipartisan bill that I am part of to declare fentanyl trafficking a national emergency and allow us to impose tough sanctions on criminal organizations and fentanyl supply chain hubs, but I will note that this bill—because the other piece of this regarding fentanyl was not actually included yet in this bill, that would be the resources that we need to crack down on fentanyl trafficking at our border and ports of entry.

So not only was the bill that our colleagues sadly voted down good on giving the emergency authority to the President on the border to protect our own Nation's security—something they had been asking for—but it also did a very important thing when it came to fentanyl.

Why is this such a problem? In Hennepin County alone in the State of Minnesota, the sheriff recently seized enough fentanyl to kill every single person in that county—the biggest county in my State—and we are seeing similar things to that across our Nation.

So what this bill would have done—the original bill would have done—with the negotiation is that it would have actually given modern-day technology, cutting-edge technology to our ports of entry—all ports of entry, including airports and the like, including help we may need on the northern border, the Canadian border, when it comes to things like fentanyl. So that is why I hope that someday our colleagues will reconsider and join us in advocating for strong border security as well as for the work that needs to be done on the fentanyl epidemic.

The original package, as we know, is not being considered, but we also know how important it is to go forward when it comes to our leadership around the world, whether that means standing with our allies after the terrorist attack in Israel, whether it means making sure that humanitarian aid gets to innocent people in Gaza and across the world, or whether it comes to Ukraine.

I did want to spend some time talking about Ukraine, as I have been there a number of times in the last few

years. The first time I went was actually with Senator McCain and Senator GRAHAM during the first invasion back in January 2017. In fact, I spent New Year's Eve of 2016 on the border with Senator GRAHAM and Senator McCain and the former President of Ukraine. It was there that I learned so much about the Ukrainian troops. Even back then, there were snipers killing the troops at unbelievable rates, but they kept going back to protect their own homeland.

Fast-forward, of course, and we see an even more significant invasion by Vladimir Putin and Russia once again. Just as Vladimir Putin has shown his true colors, the Ukrainian people have shown theirs, defending their democracy in brilliant blue and yellow. They have succeeded in taking back a number of lands that the Russians have seized, and that is because of their unbreakable resolve, yes, but it is also because America took the lead, joined by dozens and dozens of allies across the world, from Japan to South Korea to Europe.

Now is not the time to give up. In the words of the NATO Secretary General, the war has become a "battle for ammunition." Russia is firing nearly 10,000 rounds a day, while Ukraine is only managing 2,000. Our friends need our support more than ever.

In my last visit to Ukraine, with Senator Portman in the middle of the war, we visited Irpin. We saw the bombed-out maternity wards and the apartment buildings reduced to rubble. We saw the mass graves. Those atrocities have been met, of course, with the resilience of the Ukrainian people: the chef cooking meals for the troops on the frontlines; the nurse who traded in scrubs for camo and now serves as a field medic; the martial arts teacher leading an 11-man recon unit to keep his village safe. Those are people who stood up, and our country must stand with that democracy.

We must never forget President Zelenskyy's words on that worst evening in September, when everyone had counted them out, when all the pundits thought Russia would just roll over their country with their tanks and with their planes. What did President Zelenskyy do? He went down to the street corner and he said this. He said, "We are here." Those simple words—"We are here." Well, that is our job now. We have to say the same thing—that we are here for them.

U.S. aid has empowered the Ukrainian people to take back the territory that is rightfully theirs. It has saved lives. It has given families hope that there will be a future—but not if we turn our backs on them right now.

Throughout our Nation's history, we have been there for free nations across the globe, and we must be there again. That gets to something that is not in the bill right now. It was in the original compromise agreement, and just like Ukraine, just like the Pacific, just like the help to Central Command and the help we must give given that our

own troops are being attacked in the Middle East—it is the covenants we make.

I am here talking about the Afghan refugees, 80,000 of them approximately in the United States. They served alongside our troops. They served as interpreters. They served as intel gatherers. They put their own lives and their families' lives at risk. And they have been here. They have been in the United States.

That is why a bipartisan group of Senators have for now, sadly, years been working on a simple bill to make it clear that they are no longer in limbo. Many conservatives are supporting this bill.

I am filing a bipartisan amendment—that was just filed—with Senator MORAN. I thank him for his leadership as the ranking Republican on the Veterans' Committee and for joining me on this bill, along with Senator GRAHAM, who is a longtime lead author of our base bill on the Afghan refugees. Again, Senator GRAHAM, ranking member on the Judiciary Committee; Senator WICKER, Republican of Mississippi, ranking lead Republican on the Armed Services Committee, is filing this amendment with me; Senator CASSIDY; Senator MULLIN; Senator TILLIS; Senator MURKOWSKI; Senator CRAPO; Senator ROUNDS; Senator CAPITO; Senators COONS and BLUMENTHAL and many other Democrats as well.

We have that magic number to get over what we call our 60-vote threshold. We will win this vote, but we will win more than a vote if we are allowed to advance this amendment by both sides as they negotiate which amendments go forward. We will be more than just getting a vote; we will be standing up for keeping our covenants.

I am thinking of the people I have met, the Afghans, over the last year, the women I met with who served in the Afghan national army's Female Tactical Platoon. Our troops relied heavily on this platoon during the war. As our soldiers pursued missions hunting down ISIS combatants in unforgiving terrain and freeing prisoners from the grip of the Taliban, these women had their backs. They worked with our military's support team and facilitated discussions between our soldiers and the Afghan women whom they crossed paths with in the field.

After the war, they and so many others fled Afghanistan to build a safer, brighter future in America. One of the platoon's commanders even said that once she gets her green card, her plan is to join the U.S. Army. That is right. Even knowing everything she sacrificed for our country, leaving her family behind, putting herself in peril, she would do it all over again if we gave her the chance. I am in awe of her grit and her patriotism. Unfortunately—and this is a big "unfortunately"—she and countless others like her are living in limbo, and it is our turn to do right by the people who stood with us.

When the Hmong and the Vietnamese came to this country—I know this well because my State has a very large Hmong population—we didn't leave them in limbo and tell them: Well, you are standing here on the ground in the United States of America after helping us out, but there is a trapdoor under you because every year you have to re-apply, and you don't know what is really going to happen if you have to go back.

Are we going to send these people who stood with our troops back to the arms of the Taliban or are we going to do what is right?

This bill, which I have worked on with numerous Republican leaders, has a heavy-duty vetting—vetting—process. And I remind my colleagues that the vast majority of these people are here already. They are on our soil. We already know what they have been doing. In fact, we know that one of them, sadly, was murdered—an interpreter who was working as a driver late at night in the State of Virginia. I don't know if that is what he would have been doing if he wasn't in limbo. But that happened on our soil.

So all we are saying is that they be vetted and that they be able to get out of this legal limbo and treated with the respect they deserve.

Time and time again, our Nation's history has shown us that people who stand with us in combat don't diminish America; they strengthen America.

Our effort has earned the support of more than 60 organizations, including With Honor Action; including No One Left Behind; including Operation Recovery; the American Legion—was just with them yesterday as Senator MORAN and I and Coons and Blumenthal and others discussed this bill; the VFW—this is a major priority for the VFW; as well as some of the Nation's most revered military leaders who have lent their names.

At one point earlier last year, I went through hundreds of names of generals, retired generals who led our troops in times of war who support this bill, but today I mention Mike Mullen, ADM Mike Mullen, William McRaven, and Generals Richard Myers of the Air Force, Joseph Dunford from the Marine Corps, and Stanley McChrystal from the Army.

Maybe we should listen to them when we think about how we treat those who saved the lives of our troops, how we must keep our covenants because in the next conflict when we are standing up for democracies or standing up for American interests, what do you think people are going to say if they think they help our country, and our troops make literal, individual promises to them, and then they come back, and they don't know what is going to happen to them? Some of them are in hiding right now across the world because they know that they or their families will be killed if this continues.

We have built such a broad coalition of support because Americans from

across the political spectrum agree that it is our moral obligation.

When I am at home, vets come up to me—as I know they do to you, Madam President—they come up to me about all kinds of things; they always have: about their service, about their benefits, about what is happening with healthcare and burn pits. And we have advanced so many things to help them. But I have never seen anything more emotional for our soldiers that have served in Afghanistan than this, because they know the people that saved their lives and stood with them deserve better than this.

What we are asking for is a vote on this bipartisan amendment, and we know we can pass this amendment because we have enough sponsors on it to pass this amendment. This is the perfect bill. Why? Because it is a national security package. It is about our national security. It is about that; it is about standing with our partners; and, most of all, it is about showing the world when the United States of America makes a promise, makes a covenant, we keep it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, one of the worst humanitarian disasters in modern history is now unfolding before our eyes in Gaza today—right now. And we, as the government of the United States, are complicit.

It has been 4 months since Hamas's terrorist attack started this war, and what we in Congress do right now could well determine whether tens of thousands of people live or whether they die. Already, the human costs of this Israel-Hamas war has been staggering. Madam President, 1,200 innocent Israelis were killed in the initial terrorist attack, and more than 100 are still being held hostage.

And as I have said many times, Israel has the right to defend itself against Hamas terrorism, but it does not have the right to go to war against the entire Palestinian people. As of today, Israel's response has killed more than 27,000 Palestinians and injured more than 67,000—two-thirds of whom are women and children. Let me repeat: Two-thirds are women and children.

Madam President, 1.7 million Palestinians have been driven from their homes, and, unbelievably, some 70 percent of the housing units in Gaza have been damaged or destroyed. This is an unheard of level of destruction—80 percent of people driven from their homes and 70 percent of housing units damaged or destroyed.

And while 1.7 million people are displaced from their homes, they have no idea where they will be tomorrow or whether or not they will ever return to their homes. And many of these men, women, and children have been displaced multiple times. They go here; they go there; they go there.

Most of the infrastructure in Gaza has been destroyed. Very few water

wells or bakeries are functioning. The electricity has been cut since the beginning of the war. Sewage is running into the streets. Cell phone service is spotty or nonexistent. Most of the healthcare facilities in Gaza are not operational. Bombs falling, people getting hurt; and yet healthcare facilities not operational. Many facilities have been damaged in air strikes, and numerous, numerous healthcare workers trying to keep children alive have been killed. The facilities that are operational today lack the basic medical supplies that heroic doctors and nurses need in order to save lives and treat their patients.

And as horrible as all of this is, let me tell you what is even worse. As a result of Israeli bombing and restrictions on aid entering Gaza, only a tiny fraction of the food, water, medicine, and fuel that is needed—desperately needed—can get into Gaza. Even then, very little of that aid can reach beyond the immediate area of Rafah near the Egyptian border.

And let us be very clear and take a deep breath and understand what all of this means. It means that, today, hundreds of thousands of children are starving and lack clean drinking water. The United Nations says the entire population of Gaza is at imminent risk of famine, and some 378,000 people are starving right now. According to the U.N., 1 in 10 children under the age of 5 in Gaza is now acutely malnourished.

And when malnutrition impacts young children, it often means permanent physical and cognitive damage that will impact them for the rest of their lives. In other words, if food got in tomorrow, healthcare got in tomorrow, damage has already been severely done to tens of thousands of beautiful, innocent little children. If nothing changes, we will soon have hundreds of thousands of children literally starving to death before our very eyes.

And, unbelievably, that situation could even get worse in the immediate future. Roughly 1.4 million people—more than half of the population of Gaza—are now squeezed into the Rafah area. That is right up against the Egyptian border. Rafah was a town of just 250,000 before the war. It is a very small area, roughly 10 miles by 4 miles. Most of the people there are now packed into crowded U.N. shelters or sleeping out in tents. It is a daily struggle for them to find food or water.

Yet Prime Minister Netanyahu, the leader of Israel's extreme-right wing government, says that Israel will soon launch a major ground offensive against Rafah, where all of these people currently are. He will soon be forcing hundreds of thousands of desperate people to evacuate once again. In other words, exhausted, traumatized, and hungry families will be driven onto the road with no plan as to where they will go, how they will receive essential supplies or protection for their physical safety.

I cannot find words to describe how horrific this situation is and could be-

come. Prime Minister Netanyahu has repeatedly said that the goal of Israel's military efforts is total victory. Yet asked recently what total victory would look like, he responded chillingly by saying that it is like smashing a glass "into small pieces, and then you continue to smash it into even smaller pieces and you continue hitting them."

And the question that we as Americans and as the U.S. Congress must ask is: How many more children and innocent people will be smashed by Netanyahu in this process? It is quite clear that beyond total destruction of Gaza, Netanyahu has no plan.

Yesterday, President Biden acknowledged the severity of this crisis, and I thank him for doing that. He said that Israel's response in Gaza "has been over the top" and added that "there are a lot of innocent people who are starving. There are a lot of innocent people who are in trouble and dying. And it's got to stop." That is President Joe Biden.

President Biden is absolutely right. It does have to stop. It has to now, and that is in our hands. President Biden and Secretary of State Blinken have been trying to negotiate an agreement where Israel pauses its military operation while Hamas releases the remaining hostages. All of us hope that this deal comes together. We all want the hostages freed and the slaughter ended. But Netanyahu is resisting this proposal. In large part, this is because he is politically weak at home. Most Israelis likely blame him for creating this crisis. And in my view—my view—he is trying to prolong the war to avoid facing accountability for his actions.

Netanyahu didn't even wait for Secretary Blinken to leave the region this week before he publicly dismissed the hostage deal as delusional and brushed aside United States' concerns about expanding the ground offensive in southern Gaza. The Associated Press called this a "virtual slap in the face" to Blinken and the United States—a virtual slap in the face—and they are right.

Unbelievably—unbelievably—despite all of this, the U.S. Congress is prepared to spend another \$14 billion on military aid to Netanyahu's rightwing government—\$14 billion more, and 10 billion of this money is totally unrestricted and will allow Netanyahu to buy more of the bombs he has used to flatten Gaza and to kill thousands and thousands of children.

This is American complicity at its worst, and it is really quite unbelievable. Does the U.S. Congress really want to provide more military aid to Netanyahu so that he can annihilate thousands and thousands more men, women, and children? Do we really want to reward Netanyahu, even while he ignores virtually everything the President of the United States is asking him to do? Do we want to give even more support to the leader of the most

rightwing government in Israel's history, a man who has dedicated his political career to killing the prospects of a two-state solution?

That is really hard to believe, but that is exactly what this legislation before us will do. And what is even harder to understand is that in the midst of this horrendous humanitarian crisis, the legislation before us contains a prohibition to funding for UNRWA, the largest U.N. agency operating in Gaza and the backbone of the humanitarian aid operation. Israel's allegations against the agency are serious, and they are being investigated seriously. But you don't starve 2 million children and people and women—you don't starve 2 million people because of the alleged actions of 12 UNRWA employees.

The whole world is watching. Netanyahu is starving the children of Gaza. We cannot be complicit in this atrocity. As long as this bill contains money to fund Netanyahu's cruel war, I will do everything I can to oppose it, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I want to talk about some of the important issues that we are debating here on the Senate floor. Actually, they are quite important, and we are having a good debate. I want to just talk about some of the votes that we have taken in the last couple of days.

We voted on what I think was termed—really focused on—the Senate's border bill. A lot of people worked hard on that. I know the Presiding Officer did and Senator LANKFORD.

I did not vote to proceed to consider that bill. There are a whole host of reasons. I think the most important, from my perspective, was this administration—the Biden administration—came in and said: We are going to have a policy of full open borders—which they have. There is no doubt about that. Every American knows it, sees it. It impacts people in Alaska negatively—over 300,000 illegal immigrants in December, an alltime record, and on track for 10 million.

In my view, the border bill did not go far enough, and it is hard to trust the administration, even on provisions that we would want them to enforce, given their disastrous record for the last 3 years. So I was a no on that.

Then we turned to the national security supplemental. I want to talk a lot about that this afternoon because it is very important. I voted, actually, to proceed to the debate, to start debating—hopefully, amending—this important bill.

It is being called many things. Some are calling it the Ukraine bill, the Ukraine aid bill, the Israel bill. Having read it, having worked hard over the last 4 to 5 months to actually shape it, I think it should have a different name, maybe this name: the fighting authori-

tarian aggression national security bill. But probably the best title for this piece of legislation that we are now debating should be the national security industrial base renaissance bill.

I hope my colleagues take a look at it. I hope they read it. But I am going to explain why I think it should be called that, and then we are obviously going to have a good debate on this bill.

I am hoping that this bill—and I have mentioned this to my Republican colleagues, in particular—when people look at it and we debate it and try to make it better here on the floor, that it will unify the Republican conference, and, at the end, hopefully, get more support, because I think there is an important reason.

There are a lot of reasons why I think this can unify Members of the Senate, Members of the Republican conference. First, let me just go into one of the most obvious, which I think almost everybody agrees with. If you don't, maybe you are not reading the news. But we are in a real dangerous period, led by this guy—this new era of authoritarian aggression, as I call it, where you have dictatorships on the march, very aggressive. That is Xi Jinping, the dictator of China. They are going through the biggest peacetime buildup in world history of their military—biggest peacetime buildup ever, of any country ever.

I keep close tabs on what the Chinese are doing. This guy likes to dress up in fatigues. He is an aggressive, authoritarian dictator, working very closely with Putin; working very closely with the ayatollahs, the terrorists in Tehran; working very closely with Kim Jong Un, the dictator in North Korea.

These dictatorships are all working together. I won't go into all of it, but if you go to Armed Services hearings and Intel hearings, they are working closely together, and they are willing to use military force, particularly against their democratic neighbors, either directly or through proxies—like Hamas, when they invaded Israel—to try to undermine American interests and those of our allies. That is happening.

We are in one of the most dangerous periods since World War II right now. That is one reason that a bill like this should unify us.

Another is that our industrial base in the United States has dramatically withered, particularly in its ability to protect us. What do I mean by "protect us"? To produce weapons systems, to produce ammunition. Again, this is a fact. If you don't believe that, well, maybe you should do a little more research.

Our industrial base is withering. It is a shadow of its former self during the Cold War, certainly, during previous wars.

Mr. President, let me just give you an example. You know a lot about submarines. We are supposed to be building 1.2 Virginia-class subs a year. That

is our goal. We can barely build one a year. This is making our sub fleet, which is one of our greatest asymmetric advantages over this guy, shrink.

Even worse, 37 percent of our attack submarine fleet—that is about 18 subs—are in maintenance or idle or awaiting maintenance, just sitting there because we don't have the industrial capacity to maintain our submarine base. Anyone who studies this knows this is a giant, giant problem.

We all know this. If the bullets start flying, if a dictator like this launches a war against one of our allies, or Putin does or Iran does—they are trying to sink U.S. ships in the Red Sea right now, anyway, literally troops under attack—when the bullets are flying, that is not the time you need to build up your industrial base. So if we are in a real dangerous period, which we are, and the American ability, in terms of our industrial base, to protect our own country has withered, which it has, that is another reason we should be thinking: Let's do something about it.

A third reason the people on my side of the aisle should be taking this legislation seriously is that it is an opportunity to make up for what has been an incredibly weak Biden administration approach to national security. I talk about this a lot, but this administration is not serious about national security. The President has put forward three times in his budget each year Department of Defense cuts, inflation-adjusted cuts. He will crank up the EPA and the Department of the Interior 20, 25, 30 percent. The DOD, every year, Joe Biden cuts it.

The current budget shrinks the Army, shrinks the Navy, shrinks the Marine Corps. Do you think he is impressed by that? He is not.

In next year's budget, the Biden budget will bring the United States below 3 percent of GDP on military spending. It is probably the fourth or fifth time we have been below 3 percent in 80 years. Do you think he is impressed with that? He is not.

We have an administration, led by civilians at the Pentagon, who are not focused on lethality, who are not focused on warfighting, who have been distracted by some of these far-left social issues, which, in my view, have no business being in the Pentagon with our warfighters.

So this bill that we are debating right now is a chance to start a course correction in the dangerous world we are facing because of dictators like this and the very weak response of the Biden administration's approach to national security and defense, which they have always—go look at the budgets—always prioritized dead last of any Federal Agency.

So what does it do? Let's take a look. This is from an article from the Washington Post based on a study by the American Enterprise Institute on what this supplemental—this is actually where it was in November—what this does.

I think the most important point that I want to emphasize here is that this bill is primarily focused on rebuilding our military industrial base in this new era of authoritarian aggression. That is the principal focus.

Over half of the dollars that are in this bill—over half, over \$50 billion—go directly to America's capacity, our capacity in States all across this great Nation, mostly in the Midwest and on the east coast, some out in California, to build weapons, to build ammo, and to be ready for war if it comes—over \$50 billion. There will be thousands and thousands of jobs created by these direct investments in America.

This is a generational investment in our ability to defend ourselves. What do I mean by "generational"? Some of these investments we will see 15 or 20 years from now, hopefully, still producing weapons, submarines.

Let me just give you a few examples. Let's start with submarines. Our greatest comparative advantage, relative to China—they are catching up in a whole host of areas, but not in terms of subs. This has \$3 billion to go directly into the American submarine industrial capacity, which will unlock another \$3 billion from our AUKUS agreement with Australia. That is \$6 billion to our industrial base for submarines. There is \$5 billion for 155 artillery shells; over half a billion for counter-UAS systems. On the other weapons systems, this is directly invested in America—Patriots, GMLRS, Javelins, Harpoons, Tomahawks, HARMs, TOW missiles—built by Americans for our defense.

Do you get the picture? Over \$50 billion of this bill will go directly into our industrial base to defend ourselves. Working-class Americans, America's national security will benefit.

This is replenishing our weapons stocks, our ammunition stocks, for the U.S. military and, yes, for our allies to purchase, some of whom are at war today—Ukraine, of course, and Israel.

Now, there is a lot of focus on Ukraine and a lot of arguments about whether to provide continued lethal aid. I strongly support that. But this bill also focuses on other allies, which, like I said, in the Republican conference, I believe unifies us. Ukraine has been a debate. But let me start with Israel.

I have been out to Israel twice in the last year, including about 10 days after the October 7 attacks, with a bipartisan group of Senators. It is, obviously, our most important ally in the Middle East—one of our most important allies in the world.

Here is what I think a lot of people miss. Right now, if you go there, you will see it; you will feel it; you will understand it. Israel is under an existential threat to the very existence of their State and their people, as clear as day—Iran, all the proxies, Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis. This is not an exaggeration.

This Defense bill has close to \$17 billion for Israel in U.S. forces, in U.S.

Central Command, that, right now, are being attacked—right now: Iron Dome, David's Sling, interceptors—about 2½ billion for CENTCOM operations for our U.S. Forces, who are literally taking missiles from the Houthis right now on Navy ships in the Red Sea. I think everybody agrees: You have to fund our troops.

Let me give you another area that I think unifies us; should unify all Senators; I think it unifies a lot of Republicans. And that is Taiwan and INDOPACOM.

Taiwan has been kind of—not kind of—a big focus of mine throughout my career. I just retired from the U.S. Marine Corps last week, actually, as a colonel, after 30 years of service. My first deployment as a U.S. Marine was to the Taiwan Strait in 1995 and '96. Two carrier strike groups and a Marine amphibious ready group that I was a young infantry officer on, we were there as a U.S. commitment when the PLA was threatening to invade Taiwan. That is called the third Taiwan Strait crisis. It was their first Presidential election. American commitment was there.

I finished out my Marine Corps time as the chief of staff with the Marine Force's Pacific Command, which is a whole focus on Taiwan. The first time I ever visited Taiwan as a U.S. Senator, I will never forget. A number of Senators were there. We got on the bus. The head of our AIT embassy, essentially—not really an embassy, unofficial embassy—he welcomed us, an American citizen: Welcome to Taiwan. One of the most dynamic economies, one of the most vibrant democracies on the planet. And the only reason it exists today is because of the commitment of the U.S. military and America. For eight decades, we have kept Taiwan free.

The initial supplemental that came up to the Senate, it didn't have a lot for Taiwan or INDOPACOM. A number of us knew why. President Biden was getting ready to meet with President Xi Jinping. They didn't want to ruin the mood music at that meeting, so they didn't put much in to defend Taiwan—help us defend Taiwan—as the Taiwan Relations Act requires. So a number of us worked together—Senator COLLINS, in particular, and my office. This bill has about \$16.4 billion for INDOPACOM relevant munitions, security assistance, capacity expansion to deter China in the Taiwan Strait and throughout the INDOPACOM theater.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for the list to be printed in the RECORD.

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

THE SUPPLEMENTAL INCLUDES MORE THAN \$16.4 BILLION FOR INDOPACOM-RELEVANT MUNITIONS, SECURITY ASSISTANCE, AND CAPACITY EXPANSION TO BOLSTER DETERRENCE AGAINST CHINA

\$3.9 billion in security assistance to Indo Pacific allies and partners.

Unlocking Taiwan Assistance. \$1.9 billion to replenish U.S. military stocks so DOD can transfer existing equipment and weapons on hand to Taiwan using Presidential Drawdown Authority provided in the FY23 NDAA. This is the quickest way to arm Taiwan for its own self-defense.

Indo-Pacific Foreign Military Financing. \$2 billion for partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific to purchase U.S. defense articles, services, and training.

\$542 million for INDOPACOM unfunded requirements.

\$134 million for campaigning and Joint Training, Exercise and Experimentation.

\$49 million for Joint Training Team Taiwan.

\$25 million for Joint Task Force Micronesia.

\$19 million for Joint Experimentation and Innovation.

\$51 million for operationalizing near-term space control.

\$147 million for Guam defense system.

\$117 million for Persistent Targeting for Undersea.

\$132 million for cruise missile motor capacity expansion that is chokepoint for long-range missiles such as Harpoon, Tomahawk, LRASM, and JASSM.

\$3.3 billion to enhance the submarine industrial base in support of AUKUS and U.S. submarine production, including \$282M for military construction.

\$250 million for Treasury to provide a credible alternative to China's coercive financing practices.

The following defense investments funded in other categories of the supplemental (e.g. Ukraine, Israel, Central Command) also benefit INDOPACOM.

\$2.7 billion to expand domestic production capacity of INDOPACOM-relevant munitions.

\$755 million to increase production capacity for PATRIOT air defense missiles.

\$158 million for solid rocket motor capacity expansion, a key components for numerous missiles relied upon by the U.S. military.

\$199 million to expand industrial capacity for energetics, precision bombs, and batteries.

\$1.6 billion to increase production capacity of 155mm artillery rounds and components to reach 100K rounds per month by the end of FY2025. Taiwan uses 155mm rounds.

\$5.6 billion to increase U.S. inventories of INDOPACOM-relevant munitions.

\$2.65 billion for additional munitions to include air defense and anti-tank weapons.

\$915 million to replenish and modernize anti-radar HARM missiles.

\$550 million to max out production of long-range precision artillery rockets (GMLRS).

\$1.5 billion to procure 600K artillery rounds, a key capability for U.S. Forces Korea.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, these are areas that I think can unify us: industrial base, workers, Taiwan, Israel. Like any bill, there are things in here I don't like: too much direct support to Ukraine, direct budget support. I think the European Union—Europeans—should be doing that, not us. Senator COLLINS did a good job of limiting that. It still has too much.

If we have an amendment process here, I have an amendment that would strip that. Focus on lethal aid, not budget support where the Europeans can do that. There are other amendments out here to enhance what we give our allies.

President Biden's team recently said we are not going to send any more LNG to Asia or Europe.



I just spoke with a very senior European elected official who thinks that is a real bad idea. We have an amendment that said you can't do that, Mr. President. We have to send energy to our allies. So there is a lot more we can do to improve this bill.

I will end with this. You know, one of the arguments against this bill will say: Well, you know what, we don't have to do anything in Ukraine; we will let Putin roll. But we will be real strong in Taiwan. We will be real strong all over the rest of the world. We will deter these authoritarians there; don't worry so much about Ukraine.

But, as you know, that is not really how the world works. It is not how the world works. Deterrence is not divisible. American credibility is not divisible. You can't say we are going to be real strong in the Taiwan Strait, but, you know, no problem in Ukraine or with Israel.

These authoritarians are working together, and we need a strategic response through this very dangerous period. And how do we know deterrence is not divisible? I think the Biden administration demonstrated it with their botched withdrawal from Afghanistan.

When that happened, a number of us, myself included, said: Watch. Watch. The authoritarian regimes around the world are going to test. They are going to probe. They are going to go into different areas and press. And, of course, that happened. I don't think you have the Ukraine invasion by Russia without the botched Afghanistan withdrawal.

But, again, what I am trying to do here with my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—is say: It is not a perfect bill. I want to amend it. I certainly hope we can get to an amendment process. I know a lot of people want to get to that. But there is a lot in this bill—more than half dedicated to American industrial base, billions dedicated to Taiwan, billions dedicated to Israel—that I think should unite us. And I am hopeful that is going to happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, there have been a lot of discussions over the last few days about a bill—a bill many months in the making; a bill that has been discussed, debated, and drafted, largely in secret. We saw it for the first time Sunday evening, at 7 p.m. eastern time.

That bill has a lot of material in it. As it was released to us Sunday night, it spent somewhere just shy of \$120 billion. Since then, it has gone through some changes. It now spends just a little under \$100 billion, about \$95 billion. And it has been modified. Its scope has been narrowed.

I want to talk, first, just for a few minutes about how we got here or where we are in that process and then about some concerns I have with the bill as it now stands.

Last fall—the fall of 2023—there was a push spearheaded primarily by the White House but a push that included most Senate Democrats and some Senate Republicans—a push to get more aid to Ukraine.

Now, remember, the total aid the United States has spent on Ukraine throughout the duration of this conflict is somewhere in the neighborhood of \$113, \$114 billion. It is an enormous amount of money. The military aid component of that itself—at least until fairly recently—was more than the military aid provided by any other country or any other group of countries. It is an enormous sum of money.

All of this is going on at the same time that the American people are enduring some challenges—challenges that relate to an economy in which the dollar can purchase less and less every day. This is the inevitable, foreseeable, and, in fact, foreseen and widely warned of consequence of a government—this government based here in Washington, DC—that has been spending too much money for many years, that has been spending money to the tune of trillion-dollar and then multi-trillion-dollar deficits year after year after year.

This has happened, by the way, not during a widespread economic depression but, really, during the top of an economic cycle in which most of the last few years, unemployment has been really low.

These are not things that the government has borrowed to spend more money on because of the fact that the economy has been severely sluggish and, therefore, unable to produce as much output as we would normally hope to have. No, this is just regular government spending run amok at the peak of the economic cycle.

And as a result of this spending—this spending that has involved multitrillion-dollar deficits for the last few years, including and especially during this Presidential administration—that many years of adding that much debt to our already gargantuan national debt, which now stands above \$34 trillion, those things have a consequence. When we add that much debt—especially that much debt that quickly—because of the way in which the acquisition of new debt works in the United States, it has the same basic effect on the economy as just printing more money. Essentially, what is happening here is that we are contributing to the money supply; we have turned up the pace at which we are contributing to the money supply; and as a result, every dollar buys less.

How much less? Well, depending on which study you point to, a very conservative estimate is that the average American household has to spend about \$1,000 a month every single month to buy the same basket of goods and services of basic necessities—from housing to healthcare, from gas to groceries—\$1,000 a month more every single month to buy just the same basic ne-

cessities that they were buying prior to the day President Biden took office. And that is not very long. That does produce an effect. And it produces a type of misery that looks something like the following. Now, if people are on a salary, one way or another, it is a relatively fixed budget that most households operate on and, usually, a relatively fixed sum of money that they have to live on, whether that is through a salary or through a combination of sources, if they are independent contractors or if they are retired and live on a pension or something like that.

So that sum of money now has to take into account that everything costs about \$1,000 a month more for basic necessities every single month, working out to about \$12,000 a year. For some families, this may be more; for some, it may be a little less. But everyone is feeling the pinch. It is what happens with inflation. It hurts everyone. But it hurts the poor, middle-class Americans more than anybody else.

Rich people, interestingly enough, can find a way to get even richer, even faster, during times of great inflation. So it is one of many reasons why we ought to be concerned anytime we are going to spend a significant sum of money—a significant sum of money that is in addition to the ordinary operations of this government, the Federal Government—the government based right here in Washington, DC.

That is why it is important to think about what we are spending, how we are spending it, why we are spending it, and what consequences that spending might have.

For many of these same reasons, when this latest push to provide tens of billions of additional dollars over to Ukraine a few months ago, a number of Republicans, a number of Members—mostly Republicans, including Republicans in the Senate and Republicans in the House of Representatives—expressed concern over doing that. There was a wide range of concerns expressed. And I won't attempt to enumerate all of them. But I will just say that most of them followed along a few things. No. 1—the one that I just mentioned—inflation. The fact that we are spending a lot more money than we have, that causes inflation to become worse. The more we add to that dumpster fire, the more misery inflation is likely to create.

No. 2, this money is going to a war, a war half a world away, to which we have already contributed substantially. We have European allies that are much closer to the action—European allies that have provided some aid, provided far less military aid than we have; who have not been as quick to defend their own backyard turf as we would like and not nearly as quick to defend their turf as we have been as a country.

This matters. This matters in a number of ways. Remember, many of these allies of which I speak that are much closer neighbors to this conflict, much



closer to what is happening there, much more likely to be affected by the conflict in a direct way, are countries that belong to NATO. Remember, through NATO, for decades, the United States has been providing a significant portion of the European security umbrella, an umbrella that has benefited not only NATO allies but also their neighbors for many years.

Now, an understanding has evolved over time. There should be a certain percentage of GDP that NATO allies should be contributing to NATO. A certain percentage of their GDP should be devoted to security, to defense. A lot of those nations have not kept up with this and have missed it chronically and by a pretty significant margin. We have continued to provide our portion of the security umbrella to NATO, which is huge. It is enormous. It allows it to operate. It allows these nations to rely, to a significant degree, on our security umbrella.

Year after year, when many of those nations failed to fulfill their duties, their part of the expectation of what it means to be a NATO member, in time they get trained. They get acclimated to the fact that, hey, this is OK. This is a pretty good deal. As a result, they can spend money on whatever else they want. They can spend more money on their social welfare programs or whatever it is that they spend money on in Europe—maybe it is more wine, cheese, I don't know—whatever their governments are spending money on that is not defense when they fail to meet their NATO obligation. So as a result of that, they grow more and more dependent on what we spend.

Then, when there is a bad guy—Vladimir Putin—with a country—Russia—who goes in and without provocation attacks Ukraine, again, for the second time in a decade, then they look to us. It is understandable why they do that. They looked to us for a long time. We have shouldered a lot of burdens around the world. And in many respects, we have a lot to be proud of for that.

But this is a conversation that needs to happen because at what point should they have to match—no—at what point should they have to exceed as a percentage of GDP, perhaps collectively, those European nations in real dollars, what we have spent before we consider putting more on the line? That is a significant concern.

Some have also expressed the concern that we are devoting all this time, attention, and an enormous sum of money to securing Ukraine's borders when our own borders are insecure. We have been flooded with what some estimate to be about 10 million people who have come into this country without documentation since January 2021 when Joe Biden took office. They wonder why we are doing so much to secure the borders of another country half a world away while doing little or nothing to secure our own.

Some have also noted, whenever we get involved in a proxy war—spending

a lot of money through another country to fight yet another country—that is very often how we get involved in a much larger conflict. This wouldn't be the first time that has happened or the second time. It has happened a number of times. The most familiar one people think of is Vietnam. We start out with proxies. We build, we get drawn in, and we are eventually direct combatants.

It is worth considering, worth taking into account, not necessarily dispositive of whether we get involved in any war, but this is a war we have been fighting through a proxy—Ukraine—against an adversary—Russia—with a very large nuclear arsenal, one that is large enough to destroy the United States many, many times over. That has to be taken into account. That question becomes more meaningful every time we invest more money, every time we increase the lethality, the type of weapons assistance that we are providing to them. Those all need to be taken into account.

Sometimes we don't have those conversations. For those and other reasons, a number of people, mostly Republicans—Republicans in the House and Republicans in the Senate—have expressed some concern about providing additional Ukraine funding.

Last fall, when this push started in earnest, Republican leadership in the Senate suggested: Look, maybe what we should do, given that most or all Democrats in the Senate really want this funding to Ukraine, and we have some Republicans who want to be supportive but not as many—maybe we should offer up something else to achieve a compromise, to achieve something else that is important to most, nearly all—I would hope all Republicans in the Senate—and that is U.S. border security.

So for the last few months, we have anticipated what would come of some negotiations, which, unfortunately, became a lot more clandestine than I would have preferred. I speak not critically of our negotiator, JAMES LANKFORD, who is a dear friend and a good man. I think he was doing the best he knew how to do with the cards he was dealt. But those negotiations, to my great dismay and disappointment and that of many of my colleagues, occurred without our day-to-day awareness of what was happening. We were not kept informed of exactly what was in there. We were given very few details, and those details emerged mostly in the last few weeks before this document was made public Sunday night at 7 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, when we finally saw that measure.

The reason why we shouldn't have months of secret negotiations in which most Senate Republicans were kept out of the loop became more apparent. The objectives of the negotiating team had drifted pretty far from the original stated concerns of many, if not most, Senate Republicans when we embarked on this process.

The idea was to use the fact that we have a lot of enthusiasm on our side of

the aisle to secure America's border and to pass legislation that would force that, that would virtually guarantee that, that would make it very difficult—very difficult to the point of being impossible—and that we would continue to set all the wrong records, as we did in the month of December and as we have so many times during this administration, on the number of people coming across the border, the number of people trafficked into the United States by international drug cartels.

The drug cartels, by the way, are earning many billions—probably tens of billions of dollars—every year smuggling human traffic into the United States and with that human traffic are bringing in a whole host of other problems carried by them and inextricably intertwined with the human traffic they brought into the country, including enough fentanyl that in the last couple of years has killed over 100,000 people per year, enough fentanyl that if distributed widely enough, could kill every American living in this country, every single man, woman, and child.

I was told by the Border Patrol during a recent visit I made to the border in the Rio Grande Valley that for the first time since the 1860, since the adoption, in fact, of the 13th Amendment prohibiting slavery and indentured servitude in America, we now have significant numbers of people living in indentured servitude, many of them in the form of sex slavery, paying off the debts that they incurred while being smuggled into this country by the drug cartels. There was a lot of enthusiasm, for that reason, to stop that, to make it more difficult for that to continue. And that was the whole point of merging those efforts.

So when the legislation came out Sunday night and we saw that—you know, while there were some changes in law that might have been helpful over time—there was nothing in there requiring the border to be materially more secure. There were enough loopholes in there, as I read it, enough loopholes in there that not only did it not guarantee a significantly better result on border security, but in some respects it could actually make some problems worse. It could at least prolong the problem.

Those concerns were expressed. On a dime, it seemed, Senate Republican leadership turned on that very legislation they had been touting for months: It is under development. Wait until you see it. Instead of trying to fix that, instead of saying: All right, let's go back to the drawing board and see where the problem areas are, what we can fix, what we can't fix, they said: Let's not do it at all. They started quoting Republican Senators, Senators like me who had said the President of the United States can use existing law. And with that existing law, he can make material steps toward securing the border to the same degree that was achieved in the last administration

using the exact same laws; that the border security crisis, as we see it now, is not itself something that exists for want of adequate legislative authority in the hands of the President.

No, it is a willful choice on the part of the President and the Secretary of Homeland Security not to enforce those laws aggressively; in fact, in many cases not to enforce them and in some cases to openly flout the law, as he has, by admitting a couple of million people into this country under so-called immigration parole authority, parole authority which is supposed to be used only on a case-by-case basis and never a categorical basis, as it has been recently by this administration, to admit millions of people into this country. The President still could enforce the border.

Republican leadership then made the unfortunate choice to say: Well, you Republicans who care about border security have been saying it is not the lack of adequate legislative authority that the border is not being enforced. Therefore, you guys shouldn't be pushing for any border security language at all, so we will jettison that part.

That was never the point. The point was we were going to achieve a compromise. True compromise between the party should entail getting one thing one party likes and another thing another party likes and enough steam for both of them to pass when neither of them can pass. So they missed the point.

By missing that point, they also missed a real opportunity, perhaps, to get something done there. That is unfortunate. Now, we still had a chance. I made the case over the last few days that we could still offer up something. In order to do that, Republicans would have to come together, and they would have to debate both of the cloture motions we had over the last 48 hours. And after defeating both of those, say we are working on a proposal that could actually get us there—one that could include material reforms, like H.R. 2, which has been passed by the House of Representatives. I know it is something that Senate Democrats don't necessarily dream about passing—not necessarily wild about it—but it is something that would materially advance the cause of border security and materially change the circumstances on the border.

Even though the President doesn't have to have new legislative authority, this would force that, and we could force that by harnessing the enthusiasm for Ukraine aid.

But, alas, 17 or 18 Senate Republicans chose last night to move forward—or yesterday afternoon, rather—to move forward and vote for cloture on the motion to proceed, notwithstanding the fact by then, they had cut off anything having to do with border security.

This was unfortunate. We waited for months for this language. This language didn't do the job. We could have come up with other language, but we

had to stick together as a team. So much for teamwork. That didn't pan out. That really is tragic.

We now find ourselves faced with a bill that focuses on this supplemental aid package, an aid package of \$95 billion, the vast majority of which—close to two-thirds—goes to Ukraine. Some of it goes elsewhere. We will talk more about that in a moment.

There is a lot in here, a lot to cover, but let's start with the fact that in addition to the aid sent to Ukraine or sent to the Pentagon to replenish stockpiles of weapons that have been released to Ukraine under Presidential drawdown authority or otherwise, in addition to all that, it provides some \$238 million—roughly a quarter of a billion dollars—to cover deployments of U.S. troops to Europe.

That is significant. It begs all kinds of questions. Why is that happening? Where is it going exactly? If we are doing that, does that mean we are getting ready to be involved directly or kinetically in this war? What does that mean? Why are we doing this, by the way, without a plan, a comprehensive strategy for Ukraine? What is it that we want to achieve? How far are we willing to go to get there? Are we going to be directly involved? At what point will we be adopting or must we consider an authorization for the use of military force or a declaration of war? All those questions are left unaddressed by this as we spend roughly a quarter of a billion dollars on additional troop deployments to Europe.

It allows for an additional \$7.8 billion worth of weapons to leave our stockpiles, U.S. stockpiles, immediately. This is a pretty big sum of money.

Now, keep in mind that for many of these weapons, especially many of the weapons that seem to be the most talked about and the most useful here, a lot of them, including the weapons systems known as HIMARS, Javelins, ATACMS—those are things that are being depleted, have been depleted very rapidly from our stockpiles, as we have been sending them to Ukraine. They also happen to be many of the same weapons that may become very valuable, very much in demand, and very much are now in short supply should additional need for them break out in, for example, Taiwan or Israel.

So as the planet is becoming a more dangerous place and we are depleting those, yes, we are authorizing an additional \$7.8 billion of weapons to leave our stockpiles immediately. Now, why is this significant? Ordinarily, there is a default rule set into law that says you can't have more than \$100 million in weapons leave our stockpiles through Presidential action alone without a new law being passed by Congress to allow that—\$100 million, one-tenth of a billion dollars. This is many times that. And I understand that this is a deliberate choice. Congress can do that. After all, it is a statute that imposes a cap. Congress, having adopted that cap, can increase or decrease the

cap anytime it wants to. But let's think about why. Let's think about how much this makes sense. Let's think about whether and to what extent this is in our interest—\$7.8 billion. This is almost 80 times, about 78 times the ordinary drawdown authority that we would allow absent some extraordinary action.

Now, when those weapons are released—as many of them already have been under previous authorities—we are still looking at years before many of them can be replenished. This is not stuff that we can just produce tomorrow. You can't just turn on a switch or place an order. This is not like ordering a new set of double-A batteries from Amazon. No, this takes a fair amount of time. In fact, for some of these weapon systems—many of them, in fact—I am told it may well be impossible for us to replenish them prior to 2030. Who knows where we will be then. Who knows what conflicts might require their use by then. And will we find ourselves unprepared? One can easily imagine scenarios in which we could.

If we have to engage, for example, in the Indo-Pacific in the near future—let's say Beijing fulfills the fears of many for years and decides to make a move on Taiwan—what happens then if our shelves are barren, left barren because of this conflict? I think that needs to be discussed more than it has been.

That is one of the most unfortunate offshoots—and there are many—of the way this bill has been handled over the last few months. We put it on the back burner while it has been negotiated and negotiated, we thought initially—we hoped, believed initially—under terms that would involve our being apprised and informed regularly about what was happening and allowed to see text. That didn't happen.

When we finally saw text, that text didn't contain what most of the Senate Republican conference asked for at the outset. Now, because of concerns with that part of the bill, that part of the bill was just jettisoned, and we are back to just the foreign aid stuff to be spent mostly in the same three areas we had talked about at the very beginning.

As a result of all of that, it is as though there has been a distraction. One could use this to distract people from conversations like this one. So we shouldn't be rushing this one. We should have conversations about that and figure out whether it makes sense and what we are going to do in order to protect ourselves in current and such future conflicts as may arise, as to which we have no ability to predict right now.

The legislation also allows for the Department of Defense to enter into new contracts for a total of \$13.7 billion in new equipment—new equipment specifically for Ukraine through the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative—with no requirement whatsoever

for the Biden administration to prioritize contracts for our own readiness, for America's defense.

Why should we be worried about that? Well, as we are worried about replenishing the stockpiles of the weapons I just referred to a moment ago, we are placing new orders, new contracts, new money—\$13.7 billion for additional weapons—and those are all going out without any obligation on the part of the Biden administration to negotiate in a preference for a priority basis for weapons to be used by the United States to be placed back in the U.S. stockpiles. Where does that leave us? Well, I think it leaves us back in a similar position to what I described a moment ago.

Look, our military is the most feared force in the world with good reason. We have the best and the brightest men and women in the whole world ready to fight for us at a moment's notice, and we also have the best weapons systems in the world. But when you get to be king of the hill, as our military currently is and I hope will be for the entirety of the time I am on this planet and I hope in perpetuity, you don't get to that point and then consider yourself immune to the risk of being thrown off that hill. The minute we deplete our weapons stockpiles is a moment that we should be concerned.

The legislation also funds the Ukrainian National Police. It funds the Ukrainian National Police and State Border Guard in Ukraine with \$300 million. That is great. I am glad that Ukrainians are concerned about Ukraine's borders—enough that they have apparently asked us for this assistance—but this bill contains nothing to secure our border. Last I checked, Ukraine is not being besieged by immigrants from all over the world, including a lot of people on the Terrorist Watchlist, including people from countries as far from Ukraine as the United States is from Afghanistan and Syria and China and all kinds of countries that are not in or connected to Latin America.

See, that is another thing I learned on my most recent trip to McAllen, TX, from the Border Patrol, who told me that this is not what we have seen in the past, not what we normally expect to see coming across the borders. You have people from all over the world, including parts of the planet where there are a lot of people who don't like us very much and are known to plant people, to come into our country without let's say gestures of good will on their minds—yet another reason why this bill should give the American people pause. It should give us pause.

If we are willing to spend that on Ukraine's border security, why not ours? Yes, I know they are at war, and that is significant. That is tragic. Yes, Vladimir Putin is a bad guy, and we don't want him to be able to pursue his ambitions. Our job first and foremost is to protect this country. When we can

protect other countries half a world away, we ought to have that discussion, and we ought to have that discussion in a way that makes very clear to the American people how that benefits them directly, how that makes them safer.

I don't mean to suggest that any of these questions are easily answered, but I do mean to say emphatically that American border security, which is at risk in ways that it never has been not just in my lifetime but in the entire existence of this country—at least since the end of the War of 1812 but in other ways, since it came to be—we are in deep trouble with our border security.

People are pouring across who do not mean us well, and we have to be concerned about this. This bill turns a blind eye to that, even while fetishizing border security in another nation half a world away.

I don't think the American people will take enormous comfort when they hear these and other concerns, when they learn that \$7.8 billion to be sent to Ukraine through this legislation will go to ensure that Ukrainian bureaucrats don't miss a paycheck. We send this thing over as part of the economic support fund for Ukraine, and it is there, as I understand it, to make sure that every government employee in Ukraine doesn't miss a paycheck, gets paid for an entire year. Billions of dollars to subsidize all kinds of things in addition to paying their government workforce. My understanding is that it is also going out in various grants to subsidize everything from clothing stores to people who sell concert tickets for Ukraine, all while making sure their budget is fully funded for an entire year.

All this is happening while Americans are living paycheck to paycheck and where that paycheck doesn't last very long, like it used to, because they have to shell out an additional \$1,000 a month every single month, and this trend has been ongoing ever since January 20, 2021, when Joe Biden took office, and, not coincidentally, this inflationary cycle steadily became worse and worse.

The bill also begins Ukrainian reconstruction. Now, this one is interesting. In most parts, it sends \$25 million for the transition initiatives account of USAID, and it sends this out for frontline and newly liberated communities, communities reclaimed from previous Russian occupation.

There are a couple things about this that concern me. No. 1, I am not aware of a lot of communities that have been reclaimed. I am sure there are some. I am told there are a few, but they are few and far between.

Sending \$25 million—I suppose the only reason it is that small a number—you know, most Americans think of \$25 million, and they say that is an enormous sum of money, and it is. It certainly is. And that has been hard-earned by the people who have paid it. But compared to the rest of this bill, it is a tiny drop in a very large bucket.

So why should that be concerning? Well, for setting the predicate now for the fact that it is going to be the United States on the line—U.S. taxpayers on the line most notably—in order to fund these transition initiatives. Does that mean we are going to be responsible for rebuilding Ukraine as, if, when this war is won? Is that our job? Do we have to rebuild these buildings? Is it a hard-working mechanic from Denver, a plumber from Boston, a police officer from Provo? Why exactly are their paychecks and their dollars and their bank accounts and their hard-earned money being tapped for that? And more to the point, if they are going to be on the hook not just for these isolated, Marshall communities, then does that mean if—when—this war is finally won, we will be doing all of that? They will be concerned about that, and they have every reason to be. (Mr. OSSOFF assumed the Chair.)

Now, the legislation does ask for a multiyear strategy for Ukraine, and it is a good thing to have a strategy. I wish we had a strategy for how this war is going to be won and how our role in it helps bring an end to that and how to prioritize different actions that we might undertake and what they might cost, what they might entail. But this strategy of which I speak places the United States at its helm, and as I understand it, it doesn't do the things that I just described that need to happen, but it does put the United States at the helm, sort of in a pole position, as the people in charge of this outside of Ukraine.

I am not sure that is a great idea. It seems like yet another gift to woke and complacent European allies already not meeting their NATO obligations that refuse to own up to the responsibility of protecting and securing their own continent in their own backyard.

Now, that takes us to another area of concern, to a different part of the world. The nearly \$10 billion for humanitarian aid in this bill—somewhere between \$9 and \$10 billion when you add up a couple of accounts—that by the terms of the legislation may be used in and around Ukraine and in and around Israel, some of that money, one has to assume—in theory, all of that money—could end up going to Gaza, humanitarian relief in Gaza. Of course, there are dire humanitarian conditions in Gaza, and that is heartbreaking. But there is nothing in this bill that, as I view it, prevents that money or such money as goes to Gaza from ending up in the hands of Hamas and benefiting Hamas. And as I look at—I am not sure there is a way to do it. And that is one of the reasons why I am concerned that there isn't a restriction on aid to Gaza here because Gaza itself is under the thumb, not of a state, not of a government as we would conceive of it—it is unlike anything we have ever known here and hopefully anything we ever will know on this continent, certainly in this country. But to say we are

going to give aid to Gaza, but without it benefiting Hamas, it is almost impossible to conceive of.

Let's remember what has happened in the past with other conflicts where we have sent humanitarian aid to other entities, places like, I don't know, Afghanistan, for example. Don't worry. This is humanitarian aid, and it is not going to get into the hands of al-Qaida and its affiliates—the bad people in Afghanistan who rule over Afghanistan with an iron fist—and it did. It empowered them. It emboldened them. It ultimately helped arm them.

We are fooling ourselves if we think this is going to be any different. So it troubles me that we didn't draw a hard line there, acknowledging that almost any aid that we make available for Gaza is going to end up helping Hamas. And when you help Hamas, you are helping Iran and its proxies wage a war of terror, not only against Israel but against the United States, against Western civilization.

This should concern all of us: Democrat, Republican, Independent. I don't care. It should be worrisome. We saw the devastation that rained down on Israelis who had, themselves, done nothing—nothing—to deserve this on October 7. We saw the inhumanity unfolding there.

It is the tip of the iceberg compared to what they want to do, what they have promised to do, what we may well unwittingly equip them to do if we are not careful, and we have not been careful here. Shame on us.

It also perpetuates the cycle of endless, unconditional wars in the Middle East, wars bought and paid for by the United States. It encourages escalating conflicts in the region to the tune of \$2.4 billion going to Central Command, risking direct engagement with Iran. Whenever we do this, we risk that. There is so much in this bill that risks imminent conflict with Iran, and you don't think we are talking about that?

We have been so caught up talking about the palace intrigue associated with these phantom border security provisions that we didn't get to see for months. And when we saw them, we had concerns about them. And when we voiced those concerns to Republican leadership, we were told too bad, too late. We are going to characterize you as the reason this failed, and we are not going to consider anything else. We are going to join up with the Democrats to support cloture on the motion to proceed to legislation that unites the Democrats—all but one in yesterday's vote—and sharply divides Republicans. What were there? Seventeen Republicans who voted to support them. Uniting Democrats, sharply dividing Republicans, while advancing Democratic policy interest. This is deeply concerning.

I want to get back to Gaza for a moment. I think a lot of Americans would be absolutely shocked and horrified to learn that Congress has almost no visibility into how our funds are used

within the United Nations and other multilateral globalist organizations.

With Ukraine alone, our own government admits that "routing U.S. assistance funds to Ukraine through multilateral institutions . . . where U.S. donations will merge with funding streams from other international donors [and that that] has the potential to reduce transparency and oversight."

So I use this here in the context of Gaza by comparison. We know what we are doing. This is not a surprise. When we put money out there into the stream of international commerce, into the stream of international government-to-government business dealings, we know full well that that is going to end up in the hands of others, will be placed, in turn, in the hands of others. And before we know it, we have lost any opportunity to have transparency or to achieve any degree of oversight.

So why would we expect that routing our assistance for Gaza through the United Nations will be any different, that it will be 1 degree different. We shouldn't. We are foolish to think that. In fact, think about it: decades of the United States bankrolling the entire United Nations' system. We are, by far, the United Nations' largest benefactor, much to my dismay. We have been for some time. But decades of the United States bankrolling that whole system in the United Nations has made taxpayers complicit in all sorts of things that Americans don't like, don't want, and have every reason to oppose. But somehow we, and the United Nations, end up being shielded from this because of how many times those dollars change hands.

Well, it is not on us anymore. It is on this person. It is on the United Nations. The United Nations says: Well, we give it to this entity. We give it to that entity. Before you know it, nobody is in charge. Nobody is accountable for where the money went, how it was spent, and whether it harmed those who worked many hard hours to pay their taxes in the United States to fund those things.

And in doing that, we made taxpayers complicit in all kinds of things: in terrorism; in blatant, virulent forms of anti-Semitism; and in the indoctrination of generations of children living in Gaza.

That is one of the reasons why, once we are past this phase, once we are past the motion-to-proceed phase—assuming we pass it, which appears far too likely for my comfort—I will be introducing an amendment, an amendment to clarify that not only will our dollars stop funding UNRWA—which, mercifully, this legislation does. Mercifully, this legislation says none of it can go to UNRWA, a U.N. entity that has been particularly problematic in promoting anti-Semitism, violent rhetoric, advocating for acts of violence against Jewish people, and other hateful rhetoric. Not only will our dollars stop funding UNRWA, but they will no

longer fund any U.N. organization operating in Gaza.

Look, we have been down this road before, funneling our aid dollars through multilateral institutions, and we know exactly how this ends. Without my amendment—I have got others, lots of others, in fact—but without this particular amendment of which I now speak, there is nothing in this bill to prevent the administration from taking funds that would otherwise have gone to UNRWA and redirecting them to any of the or any combination of the nearly 2 dozen other U.N. entities that happen to operate in Gaza, where we lose all visibility into where our dollars end up and how they are used.

Look, enough is enough. Like most multilateral institutions supported by the United States as the principal benefactor or not, the U.N. is a bloated, corrupt system far past its prime, and it has proven adversarial to U.S. interests, interests of the United States as a whole and of its people.

A truly just outcome would be for us to stop funding the United Nations overall, and I have been advocating for that. But that is a discussion point for a different day.

But the point here that I have to make is that we can't trust this administration not to fund U.N. programs in Gaza, and we can't trust the U.N. not to fund terrorists, which is exactly why my amendment is urgently needed.

Before I close, I also want to talk about another amendment that I will be introducing—again, this is a non-exhaustive list—but another one that needs to be mentioned here is one that imposes restrictions on the economic support fund in the legislation, the economic support fund relative to Ukraine.

Every dollar in economic aid in this bill for Ukraine really is, as written, it is a slap in the face to every hard-working American battling the cost-of-living crisis created by Bidenomics here at home.

Now, economic aid isn't going to win the war for Ukraine. On the contrary, economic aid may, at best, prove to be a waste of money, may, at worst, end up prolonging the conflict, prolonging the problems and the agony from it by masking the true cost to Ukrainians and to Europeans, more broadly, of this conflict. Americans would be furious to learn that billions of dollars out of their paychecks are subsidizing clothing stores and concert tickets for Ukrainians, while families here live paycheck to paycheck.

Now, some of my colleagues called the billions of dollars in economic assistance provided to Ukraine a small amount. Really? Economic assistance makes up 34 percent of the \$113 billion in assistance the United States has already provided to Ukraine. Calling that a small portion is an insult to every struggling American, every American family struggling to put food on the table and a roof over their heads.

But leaders of both parties will tell you that this bill will cut economic aid

to Ukraine. Well, that is a lie. One doesn't cut aid by adding to it. And let's be clear: Providing \$7.8 billion instead of Biden's initial boondoggle request of roughly \$11 billion is not a cut. It is simply starting with a larger number only to reduce it. It is not a cut.

The bill, as written, mercifully prohibits pension pays out of that economic assistance fund, but it allows American tax dollars to keep paying the salaries of Zelenskyy and his bureaucrats.

Now, my colleagues have also said that cutting economic aid to Ukraine in this bill sends a message to our European NATO allies to step up and do more. But make no mistake, this is a laughable attempt at burden sharing.

Look, my time is expiring. I will be back. I will be back to speak more of concerns that I have with the legislation and ways that I have come up with that, if passed by this body prior to passage of this bill, could make some things better, could make some things less bad. I think, at this point, that may be the best thing we can do. We will do everything we can do it.

Make no mistake, this bill is a mistake. It has been written in the wrong way, and it serves the wrong people. Our job, first and foremost, is to do no harm to the American people, and, on that front, this bill fails miserably.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for up to 15 minutes, Senator MURRAY be permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes, and Leader SCHUMER for up to 5 minutes prior to the rollcall vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to urge strong support for the national security supplemental appropriations bill before us.

Earlier this week, General Kurilla, the Commander of U.S. Central Command, told me that this is the most dangerous time in 50 years. The threats the United States faces from an aggressive Iran and its proxies, an imperialist Russia, and a hegemonic China are interconnected, and they require our immediate attention. That is why this bill focuses not only on strengthening our allies but also on fortifying our military and rebuilding our own defense industrial base.

Since October, there have been more than 170 attacks on U.S. servicemembers throughout the Middle East. We have seen unprovoked attacks on our naval ships and the loss of two Navy SEALs at sea and three brave servicemembers in Jordan.

Merchant ships have been attacked in the Red Sea. They have been protected by our Navy ships, including, I am proud to say, the USS *Carney*, a destroyer built at Bath Iron Works in Maine, which has shot down numerous Houthi UAVs.

Despite the perilous times we live in, I heard a colleague suggest on the Senate floor that we are not ready to consider this bill. I would contend that we cannot wait any longer.

He also implied that it had been shrouded in secrecy. That is simply inconsistent with the facts.

The package before us is the result of months of deliberations, starting on October 20, when the President submitted his national security supplemental request to Congress, available for all to read and review.

On October 31, the Senate Appropriations Committee held a 3½-hour hearing on the request. Virtually every Member of the Committee attended. Secretary of State Blinken and Secretary of Defense Austin testified. Prior to this hearing—this public hearing—the last time the Committee held a hearing on a supplemental budget request was March 25, 2010—more than 13½ years earlier.

So, under the leadership of Chairman MURRAY and myself, we have been transparent. We have held countless public hearings, including on the supplemental before us.

The following week, our committee held a second hearing. At this hearing, the Secretaries of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services testified on the supplemental request. In the time that followed, there were numerous discussions on the content of the supplemental funding bill. Information was gathered on emerging needs, particularly with regard to U.S. military operations in the Middle East, and the bill's language was refined and improved.

On February 4, the text of the national security and border supplemental was released along with a section-by-section analysis to make it easier for Members.

After it was clear that there was not sufficient support to advance the border security provisions, revised text and a summary were circulated that excluded the border security sections, and that is the package before us today—a package that has taken us months to get to this point and that began in October with the submission of the budget request and was subjected to extensive public hearings.

Further delay—or worse, an outright refusal to address these challenges—cannot be the answer. There is simply too much at risk.

The package before us would bolster U.S. military readiness, help Ukraine counter Russian aggression, assist Israel in its fight against terrorists, and deter a rising China.

Now let me briefly describe the major components of this legislation.

First, \$35 billion would go to restoring U.S. military readiness. This includes \$26 billion to replenish Defense Department stockpiles with new and, in many cases, upgraded weapons and equipment; \$5.4 billion to increase production capacity for artillery, air defense, and long-range precision mis-

siles; \$3.3 billion to enhance the U.S. submarine industrial base in support of our trilateral security partnership with the United Kingdom and Australia, known as AUKUS.

This funding directly supports our military defense and defense industrial base. One of the ways that we support Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan is through the transfer of weapons and equipment from our stockpiles. The replenishment funding that I just mentioned allows us to replace those articles with new and often more modern, more effective munitions and equipment, benefitting both our military and theirs. By modernizing our arsenal of democracy and improving the readiness of the U.S. military to deter any adversary, this funding makes America stronger.

Second, the bill provides resources to assist Ukraine as it defends its territory following the second Russian invasion. And let us keep in mind, Putin has made no secret of his plan. His plan is to re-create the former Soviet Union. If he is allowed to be successful in Ukraine, I believe he will then seize Moldova, invade Georgia, menace the Baltic States, and threaten Poland. And then our troops will be involved in a European war.

Today, we are not the one. Our troops are not dying on the Ukrainian battlefield.

We include \$15.4 billion to help Ukraine purchase weapons from the U.S. industry so that it can defend itself. It includes \$11.3 billion to support our servicemembers in Europe, principally in Poland and Germany, who are helping our allies equip and train Ukrainian forces. It also provides \$9.4 billion for economic assistance to help Ukraine rebuild its economy.

Now, let me spend a moment on this point. The President's request for direct budget support was \$11.8 billion. We rejected that amount as too much. We reduced it to \$7.8 billion, and we further stipulated that no funds could be used to reimburse pensions.

Tonight, I heard on the floor that the Europeans were not doing their part. That is simply not true. Many of our European partners—I think of the Baltic States, for example, with whom Chair MURRAY and I met with representatives of recently—are contributing a greater percentage of their GDP, by far, than we are.

Why are we joining our European allies in providing economic assistance to Ukraine? As part of his plan to try to force Ukraine to surrender, Putin has sought to destroy Ukraine's economy, tax base, and exports, including grain exports. This funding seeks to help Ukraine rebuild so that ultimately it will be able to provide for itself economically once again.

But we are not just giving blank checks. We have included \$23 million for inspectors general for continued oversight of Ukraine assistance, including funding for the special IG that was established in this year's National Defense Authorization Act.

Earlier in this debate, one of our colleagues suggested that our country had no strategy for Ukraine. But, once again, the language of this bill has been ignored. It requires a strategy with achievable objectives with respect to U.S. assistance to Ukraine. And the Appropriations Committee did not draft this language alone. We did so in consultation with the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees.

Third, this bill fully funds the budget request to support Israel in the war against Hamas. It includes \$5.2 billion for Israel's missile defense programs, including Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Iron Beam. The first two of those are coproduced with the United States. It also includes funding from—foreign military financing for Israel and funding for U.S. Embassy support, oversight, and other assistance.

This next part is really important. The bill includes—it adds to the supplemental \$2.4 billion to support our U.S. forces as they face ongoing attacks in the region and to sustain U.S. military operations in Central Command against the Houthis and other Iranian-backed proxies. General Kurilla stressed to me how critical this funding is.

Fourth, this bill includes resources aimed at deterring a rising China.

It includes \$2 billion in foreign military financing for the Indo-Pacific region, which includes, obviously, Taiwan but also the Philippines and Vietnam.

It provides funding for missile defense for Guam, for new technologies to detect undersea threats, and for training and exercises.

Funding is also included to address a chokepoint in the supply chain for motors that affects multiple long-range cruise missiles, including Harpoons and the Tomahawk.

The submarine industrial base investments that I previously mentioned will also benefit our regional partners as they help the United States meet its commitment under AUKUS while protecting the size of our own submarine fleet.

Finally, I want to note that this bill includes \$9 billion for global humanitarian assistance. This funding would help the State Department and USAID respond to critical humanitarian needs around the world, from Ukraine and Eastern Europe to the Middle East and Africa. More than 108 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced today.

I want to emphasize that only 15 percent of that assistance—\$1.4 billion—is for Gaza, and of that amount, the \$400 million that had been targeted by the administration to flow through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency will not go through UNRWA.

Despite allegations highlighted in the Wall Street Journal last month and numerous other publications that at least 12 UNRWA employees had been directly involved in Hamas's October 7 terrorist attack on Israel and in taking

hostages and that around 10 percent of all of its Gaza staff have ties to Islamic militant groups, incredibly, the Biden administration continued to push for UNRWA funding.

I want my colleagues to know that this bill includes an outright prohibition on funding in this supplemental and prior appropriations from being used for any grants, contributions, or other U.S. payments to UNRWA. We can distribute that humanitarian assistance through other organizations.

The bill also includes stringent guardrails on humanitarian assistance to Gaza. By March 1, the Secretary of State must certify that policies, processes, and guidelines have been established and are in use to prevent the diversion of aid by Hamas or other terrorist groups. This includes consultations with the Government of Israel, which has made clear the importance of humanitarian assistance to its objectives in Gaza. Third-party monitoring and intelligence assessments provide additional layers of oversight. Finally, we include a total of \$10 million to the State Department and USAID inspectors general—funding that the administration did not request but that should accompany any assistance for Gaza.

I encourage my colleagues at this time, this perilous time, to support this bill that includes the funding desperately needed to strengthen America's military readiness, to help Ukraine counter brutal Russian aggression, to assist our closest ally in the Middle East, Israel, in its fight against terrorism, and to deter a rising China. The stakes are high, and we must meet the moment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BUTLER). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, let's be clear. The stakes of this moment could not be higher. The question before us is nothing short of what kind of future do we want for our kids.

Our role as the leader of the free world is on the line. If we tell dictators like Putin they can trample sovereign democracies with impunity; if we tell our allies that they are on their own; if we tell suffering civilians help is not on the way; if we tell the world the era of American leadership and resolve is over, we will be inviting chaos, emboldening dictators, and leaving the world a much more dangerous place for our kids. That is exactly why this package is so important. That is why we have insisted for months on a serious, comprehensive national security supplemental that actually meets this moment and doesn't leave any of our allies behind.

It has been a long, frustrating road, but Democrats have been glued to the negotiating table because failure is not an option here.

Listen, I hope we move forward quickly on this package now. I, like many others, want a fair and reasonable, bipartisan amendment process, but recognize that those of us who un-

derstand the stakes of this moment are ready to stay here as long as it takes to get this done.

I hope all of our colleagues will continue to work with me and the Senator from Maine to get this over the finish line because right now soldiers in Ukraine are counting their bullets, wondering how long they can hold out. Dictators are watching closely to see if this is their time to make a move. Civilians, including kids, are caught in the crossfire and are in desperate need of food and water and medical care.

We do not have a second to lose, so let's get this done and show the world American leadership is still strong.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, in a few moments, the Senate is going to take the next step toward passing the supplemental. Tonight's vote keeps the process of passing this emergency national security package moving forward on the Senate floor.

As I said, I hope our Republican colleagues can work with us to reach an agreement on amendments so we can move this bill more quickly. Democrats are willing to consider reasonable and fair amendments here on the floor as we have shown on many occasions in the past 3 years. Nevertheless, the Senate will keep working on this bill until the job is done.

I yield the floor.

#### VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All postcloture time has expired.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to proceed.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BRAUN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BUDD), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. HAGERTY), the Senator from Mississippi (Mrs. HYDE-SMITH), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD), the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MARSHALL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting: the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted "nay."

The result was announced—yeas 64, nays 19, as follows:



[Rollcall Vote No. 42 Leg.]

## YEAS—64

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rounds
Bennet	Hirono	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schumer
Booker	Kelly	Shaheen
Brown	King	Sinema
Butler	Klobuchar	Smith
Cantwell	Lujan	Stabenow
Capito	Manchin	Sullivan
Cardin	Markey	Tester
Carper	McConnell	Thune
Casey	Menendez	Tillis
Cassidy	Merkley	Van Hollen
Collins	Mullin	Warner
Coons	Murkowski	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Welch
Durbin	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Fetterman	Padilla	Wicker
Gillibrand	Peters	Wyden
Grassley	Reed	Young
Hassan	Romney	
Heinrich	Rosen	

## NAYS—19

Blackburn	Graham	Sanders
Boozman	Hawley	Schmitt
Britt	Hoeven	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lee	Tuberville
Cramer	Paul	Vance
Crapo	Ricketts	
Fischer	Rubio	

## NOT VOTING—17

Barrasso	Ernst	Lummis
Braun	Hagerty	Marshall
Budd	Hyde-Smith	Moran
Cornyn	Johnson	Risch
Cruz	Kennedy	Scott (FL)
Daines	Lankford	

The motion was agreed to.

# REMOVING EXTRANEOUS LOOP-HOLES INSURING EVERY VETERAN EMERGENCY ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 815) to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## AMENDMENT NO. 1388

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I call up substitute amendment No. 1388. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER], for Mrs. MURRAY, proposes an amendment numbered 1388.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of February 7, 2024, under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

## CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I have a cloture motion for the substitute amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

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 Murray substitute amendment No. 1388 to Calendar No. 30, H.R. 815, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to make certain improvements relating to the eligibility of veterans to receive reimbursement for emergency treatment furnished through the Veterans Community Care program, and for other purposes.

Charles E. Schumer, Patty Murray, Brian Schatz, Margaret Wood Hassan, Angus S. King, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Mark R. Warner, Jack Reed, Richard J. Durbin, Alex Padilla, Catherine Cortez Masto, Christopher A. Coons, Michael F. Bennet, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mark Kelly, Martin Heinrich, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin.

## AMENDMENT NO. 1577

Mr. SCHUMER. I have an amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1577 to amendment No. 1388.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the appropriate place add the following: **SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 1 day after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

## AMENDMENT NO. 1578 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1577

Mr. SCHUMER. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1578 to amendment No. 1577.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike "1 day" and insert "2 days".

## AMENDMENT NO. 1579

Mr. SCHUMER. I have an amendment to the text proposed to be stricken at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1579 to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1388.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the appropriate place add the following: **SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 3 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

## AMENDMENT NO. 1580 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1579

Mr. SCHUMER. I have a second-degree amendment to the text proposed to be stricken at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] proposes an amendment numbered 1580 to amendment No. 1579.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

On page 1, line 3, strike "3 days" and insert "4 days".

## MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 1581

Mr. SCHUMER. I move to commit H.R. 815 to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from New York [Mr. SCHUMER] moves to commit the bill to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 1581.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask to dispense with further reading of the amendment.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To add an effective date)

At the appropriate place add the following: **SEC. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

This Act shall take effect on the date that is 5 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.