

allow California high-speed rail to move forward.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. I also would like to thank Chairman MURRAY and Chairman MIKULSKI for your explanation.

I am deeply alarmed by attempts in the other body of Congress to prohibit the Department of Transportation and the Surface Transportation Board from completing their permitting and oversight responsibly.

These attempts violate the spirit of federalism. The California high-speed rail project was approved by California's voters on the ballot, the legislature has enacted enabling legislation, and the Governor supports it.

While some may not like this type of transportation investment, it is the choice that my State has made for their future, and the Federal Government should respect those decisions.

Furthermore, I strongly believe the Federal permitting process should not be used as a tool to obstruct and delay major infrastructure investments of our States.

Permitting infrastructure in California is a notoriously thorough, long, and comprehensive process. In the years California has analyzed this one project, China has built thousands of miles of high-speed rail.

But this year, in an attempt to stymie the project, opponents of California's plan forced the Surface Transportation Board—an agency dedicated to protecting fair competition in freight rail—to assert Federal jurisdiction over California's high-speed rail project.

This new layer of Federal permitting is duplicative of the thorough 5-year-long review performed by the Federal Railroad Administration. Nonetheless, State and Federal entities complied with this extraneous requirement. However, now opponents are working vigorously to stall the actions at the Surface Transportation Board that will allow construction to finally begin in earnest.

Fortunately, the Surface Transportation Board exists to facilitate the growth of rail in the United States—not to impede it. As long as the Board acts quickly within its statutory authority, it will not impede California's decisions.

Mrs. BOXER. I also share the concerns expressed by Senator FEINSTEIN, and I would also like to reiterate that the people of California voted to fund this project. The California State Legislature voted to fund this project, and the Department of Transportation, after weighing a number of applications for high-speed rail across the Nation, decided to fund this project. I find it troubling that opponents have attempted to hinder the advancement of this project by curtailing an independent agency's mission and responsibilities, as well as trying to prohibit the transmission of appropriated funds to its rightful destination.

I am pleased that this legislation will allow the Surface Transportation

Board to act within its statutory authority. I also see that the legislation will allow the Federal Railroad Administration to administer its previously awarded grants to California, and I thank Chairman MURRAY for advancing this legislation.

I would also like to note that this project is incredibly important to the future of California. California's 170,000 miles of roadway are the busiest in the Nation, with automobile congestion draining \$18.7 billion in lost time and wasted fuel from the State's economy every year.

Additionally, flights between Los Angeles and the Bay area, which is the busiest short-haul market in the United States with 5 million passengers annually, are the most delayed in the country, with approximately one in every four flights late by an hour or more.

California's high-speed rail system will not only increase mobility and save lost time and money over the coming decades, it will also create near- and long-term employment opportunities, enhance environmental and energy goals, and spur economic development.

Mrs. MURRAY. As my colleagues know, California has a grant agreement with the Department of Transportation, and California has spent funds consistent with that agreement. I was extremely careful to draft the Senate bill to ensure that California will be able to be reimbursed for their expenses.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Thank you, Chairman MURRAY, for ensuring that California will not be left holding the bag, which is not a fair way for the Federal Government to treat the States. Were an appropriations bill to prevent the Federal Government from honoring its grant commitments, it would set a dangerous precedent. I am concerned that it would undermine the competitive process.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:57 p.m., recessed until 2 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. COONS).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SAMANTHA POWER TO BE THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Samantha Power, of Massa-

chusetts, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 hours of debate equally divided between the proponents and the opponents.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to strongly support the nomination of Samantha Power to be the next United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and I commend President Obama for selecting her for this extremely important position.

Born of Irish parents and raised in Ireland until she was 9, Samantha and her parents emigrated to Pennsylvania and Georgia, and she attended Yale and Harvard.

She is well known for her accomplishments as a journalist during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, her Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "A Problem from Hell," her leadership of the Carr Center for Human Rights, and her work as the senior director for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights at the National Security Council.

Samantha is a person of extraordinary intellect, exceptional integrity, and a strong moral compass. She is willing to challenge conventional wisdom and fight for things she feels passionately about, irrespective of the forces aligned against her.

Samantha is an internationalist. She believes in the indispensable role that multilateral organizations play in addressing global problems no country can solve alone—from genocide to global warming to international terrorism.

At the National Security Council she also brought much-needed attention to human trafficking, protection for refugees, gay rights, and gender-based violence. But what some people may be less aware of is the depth of Samantha's devotion to the principles on which this country was founded, and which I believe is one of the key reasons the President nominated her.

Samantha is an American patriot. She will not only strive to ensure that the United States leads by example at the United Nations, but that we do so in a manner that honors the Constitution and the idealism of those who wrote it, which continue to inspire people around the world. That is what people expect of the United States, and I know of no one better suited to turn that expectation into reality.

At a time when the United States faces emerging threats and intensifying competition for natural resources, human rights are under assault in many countries, and millions of people live in squalor or have fled their homes due to armed conflict, natural disasters, or the effects of overpopulation and climate change on the availability of land, water and food, how effectively we use our influence globally will determine the kind of world our children and grandchildren inherit.

Now is the time for the United States to embrace these challenges, and I am confident that Samantha Power will do so with every bit of conviction and energy that she has.

To those Senators of either party who have at times differed with this administration over foreign policy or who may doubt the importance of U.S. support for the United Nations, I encourage those Senators to speak to Samantha directly. There is no one better informed, no one more willing to listen to other points of view, and no one more persuasive, than Samantha Power.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho is recognized.

Mr. RISCH. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. RISCH pertaining to the introduction of S. 1430 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CHAMBLISS. I rise to promote and suggest to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that we support the nomination of Samantha Power to be the next Ambassador to the United Nations.

This is a very complex world we live in today. Certainly the forum of the United Nations, in spite of some issues that all of us had with that body over the years, remains the one forum where the United States, No. 1, gets to exhibit strong leadership with our friends, our allies, our adversaries, and a strong voice in the United Nations is imperative.

Samantha Power is an individual who possesses the type of character, the type of strong background, and the person who possesses the intellect and the right kind of ability to communicate to represent us today in this complex world at the United Nations.

Samantha was born in Ireland but moved to the United States shortly thereafter. She was educated in the public schools in Atlanta, Yale, and Harvard. Obviously, she has the intellect, from a background standpoint, to represent our country at the U.N.

Between her stints at Harvard and Yale, she did reporting as a journalist on the ground, reporting on the Yugoslav wars. She was hands-on dodging bullets and being involved from the standpoint of making reports to various journals and other publications about what was happening in those Yugoslav wars.

Samantha is an individual who developed a passion for human rights. She is not bashful about sharing that passion. It is a commendable passion that she has for human rights.

From 2005 forward, Samantha has been involved almost exclusively in the arena of foreign policy, first as a staffer for then-Senator Obama, later involved in his campaign, and most recently as a member of the National Security staff.

Samantha is not only knowledgeable, she is knowledgeable in the right way when it comes to foreign policy. She is not only smart, but she is worldly. She has the charisma, in her own way, No. 1, to express herself in a way that right now the United States needs to be expressing itself.

This is why I am so excited about the opportunity to see her on the ground at the United Nations representing our great country. She can be tough when she needs to be tough. She can be charismatic, and she can also be sharp-tongued.

With the adversaries she is going to have to be dealing with at the United Nations, all of those assets are going to come into play. Samantha is going to do a great job as our next U.N. Ambassador. I applaud her for her willingness to engage in public service. I would encourage all of my colleagues to support her nomination to be the next Ambassador to the United Nations.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I understand we have 1 hour available in opposition.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I wish to speak in opposition to the pending nomination. I would like to take a few minutes to discuss the nomination of Ms. Samantha Power to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

Let me begin by saying that Ms. Power is an impressive person. She has an inspiring personal story, she is clearly very intelligent, and she has already accomplished much in her career. However, I do have three concerns I want to take a moment to highlight today.

The first has to do with a concern I have about her unwillingness to directly answer questions I personally posed to her during her confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I asked her about statements attributed to her in the past alleging that the United States had committed "crimes" that it needed to reckon with. I raised the question not to embarrass her but to give her the opportunity to clarify by either pointing out examples of these crimes or to clarify what she meant by those comments. Instead, she kept avoiding directly addressing my question. She kept saying that America was the greatest country in the world and that she wouldn't apologize for America.

I don't think it is unreasonable to be concerned about those statements, and I do not think it is unfair to be concerned about the fact that we are sending someone to represent us at the most important international forum in the world who thinks the United States has committed crimes that it needs to reckon with.

I believe I and members of the committee deserved an answer to the ques-

tion. Instead, what we got in response was a rehearsed line. I believe it was a missed opportunity for her and for all of us. To me, these statements she made in the past and her inability to answer or address them raise questions about her judgment, although—let me be clear—I certainly do not question her patriotism.

Secondly, I have an even greater concern that she is being appointed by a President whose foreign policy is fast becoming an utter and absolute failure. From crises in the Middle East, to strategic uncertainty in Asia, to a country we were told was a partner but is now harboring a fugitive and traitor who has done great damage to U.S. national security, I believe the world is now more dangerous and more uncertain than when President Obama took office. It is increasingly apparent that our foes are more willing than ever to challenge us. Even more troubling is that those who seek to emulate us, who desire the freedom we all, as Americans, enjoy, are often left to fend for themselves with little American support.

A strong, engaged America has been good for the world and for the American people. When America fails to lead, the result, as we see in Syria today, is chaos—a chaos that allows others with goals other than our own to fill the void we leave behind.

History taught us twice in the last century that even if we put our heads in the sand and try to ignore the world's problems, those problems will not ignore us. I realize the American people are weary of war. We have paid a tremendous price in lives and money in the war on radical Islamic terrorism. But to follow the advice of those—including some in the Republican Party—who advocate disengagement from the world would be a terrible mistake. If we follow their advice, we will only pay a higher price in the long term.

Let me be clear. That does not mean America can solve every problem or get engaged in every civil war on the planet. I would confess that we also have voices here that are too eager to engage America in every conflict on the planet. We need to be careful about when, where, and how we engage American forces overseas. But isolationism on the one hand and hyperintervention on the other are not our only two options. Between these two choices we have a third option, and it is this—one based on the idea that while the United States cannot solve every problem in the world, there are very few problems in the world that can be solved without the United States.

If a problem can be solved by using an international forum such as the United Nations, that is fine, but more often than not the United Nations can not and will not confront the problem. In the end, the truth is that America is still the only Nation in the world able to form and lead coalitions to confront evil and solve problems. It is still the

only Nation on Earth able to keep the seas open for trade. It is still the only Nation capable of maintaining the safe balance of power in Asia and Europe and around the world. It is still the only Nation on Earth capable of preventing rogue nations from becoming nuclear powers. And it is still the only Nation on Earth capable of targeting and diminishing radical terrorist organizations that plot to attack and kill Americans here at home and around the world.

We should be careful when we get involved. Foreign aid is not a one-way street and should always be conditioned and based on our national interests. Military power should be employed judiciously and only where it can make a difference in defending our long-term goals. But we cannot pretend that if we ignore our enemies, they will ignore us. We must be involved, and when we get involved we must make sure not just that we are doing it the right way, we must make sure we are doing it at the right time because sometimes acting too late is worse than not acting at all. When we do get involved, it is OK to be motivated by humanitarian concerns, but the primary objective of our foreign policy must always be to protect our people from those who do or may one day want to harm us.

This is the kind of clear strategic view of America's role and of our interests that should guide our foreign policy. It is the kind of clear strategic thinking this President has failed to lay out. As a result, what we see all around us is failure.

The President dithered on Syria. We should have tried to identify secular rebels early in the conflict, and we should have made sure they were the best armed and the best trained group on the ground. Instead, the President decided to lead from behind and allow others to decide whom to arm, and the result is that today it is rebel groups linked to Al Qaeda—foreign fighters, not even Syrians—who are the best armed and best equipped groups within Syria. Now I fear Syria may be headed toward becoming another Afghanistan before 9/11, toward becoming the premier operational area in the world for global jihadists.

The President entered office with the naive belief that we could convince Iran to become a responsible nation by, quite frankly, being nicer to them. He wasted valuable early years in his Presidency not giving the Iranian threat priority, and now the Ayatollahs continue the march toward acquiring both nuclear weapons and long-range missiles that can one day threaten the United States.

I would be remiss if I did not point out that in 2009 he missed an opportunity to clearly stand on the side of those protesting a stolen election and instead chose not to because he didn't want to interfere in the "sovereignty" of another nation.

The President also wasted time thinking the cause of radical Islamic

terrorism was partially because George W. Bush was hated in the Muslim world. But despite his speech in Cairo, despite his efforts to close Guantanamo, despite his elimination of the use of the term "war on terror," Al Qaeda continues to hate America, and even as I speak here today they continue to plan attacks against America here and around the world.

The President is not alone in failing to confront these threats. I am afraid that because of the success we have had in preventing another attack on the scale of 9/11, some of our leaders in both parties have been lulled into a sense of false security. I certainly support the privacy rights and expectations of all Americans, but, my colleagues, I also know for a fact that the surveillance programs our government uses have prevented attacks and saved American lives.

I think it is a mistake to dismiss privacy concerns as crazy. After all, we have a government whose tax-collecting agency has targeted Americans because of their political views. But it is also a mistake to exaggerate them. After all, if a known terrorist is emailing or calling someone in the United States, we had better be able to know who and where that person is.

If Osama bin Laden had been calling someone in the United States on their cell phone, I promise you it wasn't a stockbroker. We had better know because these people are still plotting against us, and not if but when they strike again the American people are going to turn to us and ask: What has the Federal Government been doing to prevent this, we had better have a good answer.

We live in a very dangerous world, one, by the way, where our enemies aren't just other countries anymore. Our enemies are also rogue states, well-armed militias, and radical clerics. This kind of danger calls for a clear strategic vision on foreign policy, and this President, sadly, does not have one, which brings me to my third and primary concern about Ms. Power's nomination, and it is one that is related to the United Nations itself.

We need an advocate in New York who makes it their primary focus to ensure that the United Nations is more accountable, that it is more effective, and that it serves U.S. interests and is not just some multilateral ideal in which we invest all of our hopes.

If she is confirmed today, I hope Ms. Power does indeed become that type of Ambassador. But I have not been satisfied by the evidence thus far of this administration's willingness to be serious about tackling these issues over the last 4½ years that ensure that every American dollar going to the United Nations actually advances America's interests. I think Congress needs to play a more active role in forcing this very much needed change to occur.

What I would like to do in closing is spend a few minutes highlighting legislation that I recently introduced to

this effect. I am pleased to have as co-sponsors Senators CORNYN, RISCH, and FLAKE, and I hope more of my colleagues will join this effort.

I am not the first person to raise concerns about the effectiveness and utility of the United Nations. Former Senator John Danforth, who was serving as our Ambassador to the United Nations in 2004, when the U.N. General Assembly couldn't even pass a resolution condemning human rights violations in Sudan, said at the time:

One wonders about the utility of the General Assembly on days like this. One wonders if there can't be a clear and direct statement on matters of basic principle, why have this building? What is it all about?

Anyone who has followed the United Nations closely, especially in recent years as the Security Council has failed to respond to the crisis in Syria as more than 100,000 Syrians have died and hundreds of thousands more have been forced out of their homes, across borders, straining all of Syria's neighbors, leaving behind a failing state that is becoming a safe haven for global jihadists—all of the people who have shared these concerns and have seen this happen should be rightly asking the same question Senator Danforth asked back then.

In the midst of this horrific crisis, the United Nations has even been unable to achieve consensus on the issue of whether to allow international humanitarian organizations to provide cross-border support to tens of thousands of Syrians stuck in camps facing frequent shelling and attacks from the Assad regime.

Just as we are troubled by this inability to tackle the world's toughest problems, we should also be angry about the fact that for decades more human rights criticism at the United Nations has been directed against Israel than against actual human rights violators and that U.N. agencies and organizations have employed blatant anti-Semites; or that for decades recipients of U.S. foreign aid have only voted with the United States at the United Nations less than one-third of the time and such support, by the way, doesn't even currently factor into U.S. decisions about who receives our foreign aid; or the fact that the world's most notorious tyrants and human rights violators are allowed to serve on the Human Rights Council rather than being condemned by it; or by the fraud and the mismanagement that has pervaded the U.N.'s peacekeeping operations, including abuses and exploitation of the very people that those peacekeepers were sent to protect; or by the Security Council resolutions on Iran and North Korea that members of the U.N. willfully violate, as we recently saw with the Panamanian capture of a ship transferring weapons from Cuba, one rogue state, to North Korea, another one; or by the proliferation of mandates that have clouded the organization's mission and effectiveness.

The list goes on and on. But let me be clear. I am not here to argue that we don't need the United Nations. Ideally, we would have a United Nations where the nations of the world would come together and seriously deal with North Korea, Iran, radical Islam, and human rights. But the United Nations we have right now isn't capable of any of this. It has basically become a forum for nations whose interests are directly opposed to ours, to block our efforts using the United Nations as cover.

That is how North Korea and Iran continue to evade sanctions. That is how Israel's enemies continue their efforts to delegitimize the Jewish State. That is how Assad continues to massacre his own people with weapons built in and supplied by the Russians.

More than six decades after its creation, we still hope for a United Nations with resolve, a United Nations that acts with effectiveness and purpose. Sadly, the United Nations' persistent ethics and accountability problems are limiting its role. Until the organization addresses these important issues, it will continue to be ineffective and often irrelevant.

Americans should care about this more than any other people because we shoulder the primary fiscal burden of the United Nations' budget, and our patience is not limitless. We don't believe in continuing to throw money at programs and projects that fail to accomplish their objectives.

So my hope with the legislation I filed is to provide an incentive for the United Nations and the President and our Ambassador in New York to modernize that international body along a spirit of transparency, respect for basic human freedoms, and effective non-proliferation. This legislation would also attempt to address the anti-Semitic attitudes that have become so prevalent in certain corners of the United Nations and seriously diminish the effectiveness and credibility of the entire U.N. system.

At the core of these reforms that I proposed is an effort to instill a sense of transparency and competition at the United Nations by its adoption of a budgetary model that relies mostly on voluntary contributions. This legislation would also strengthen the international standing of human rights by reforming the U.N. Human Rights Council in a way that would deny membership to nations under U.N. sanctions, designated by our Department of State as state sponsors of terrorism or failing to take measures to combat and end the despicable practice of human trafficking. Other provisions of the bill seek meaningful reforms at the U.N. Relief and Work Agency that provides assistance to Palestinian refugees of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict.

This legislation is needed because the structure and bureaucratic culture of the organization often makes it impossible or, at best, downright difficult to achieve meaningful reforms.

In closing, for more than six decades now the United Nations has served as an important multilateral forum to address peace and security issues throughout the world. But it has never been, and it is not now, a substitute for strong American leadership. When America fails to lead, the world becomes more dangerous.

The United Nations is badly broken. I hope we will work to force meaningful transparency and accountability reforms for the United Nations. But so far this administration does not seem very interested in doing so and, unfortunately, at least based on our conversations, neither does the nominee before us. Therefore, until we begin to take some positive steps in that direction, I will not be able to support Obama administration nominees who have not committed to significant reform of the United Nations.

Ms. Power has failed to make such a commitment. Therefore, that is why I am voting against her nomination to be our next Ambassador to the United Nations.

• Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I wish to express my opposition to the nomination of Samantha Power to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

As you know, I am very interested in the ability of our American oil and gas industry to compete for business in the country of Myanmar as soon as possible. By virtually every international standard, the U.S. oil and gas industry is the world leader in technical innovation. It is my understanding, however, that Ms. Power, as one of the Obama administration's point persons in pursuing a liberal international agenda attempted to 'carve out' the American petroleum industry from doing business in Myanmar when the United States suspended economic sanctions against this country last year. Fortunately, wiser powers within the executive branch prevented such a carve out from occurring, and now the American petroleum industry can compete with those companies from the European Union, China and Russia, which are already there. Clearly, this carve out strategy would have been a strategic mistake, and it has led me to question seriously Samantha Power's ability to represent adequately U.S. national interests and security needs at the United Nations. I believe that American companies, and especially our oil and gas companies, can play positive roles in the democratic transition in Myanmar by demonstrating high standards of responsible business conduct and transparency, including respect for labor and human rights. Ms. Power's inability to recognize this fact is very troubling.

In addition, I find her position on Israeli-Palestinian relations of great concern. Israel is our friend and the sole democracy in the Middle East. It is a nation that we should support and promote in a region that is torn by violence and conflict. Samantha Power does not see it this way. Rather, she

believes that Israel should give up its historical right to its land, and that the U.S. should impose a peace plan upon Israel with the Palestinian Authority. She has also repeatedly accused our friend Israel of human rights abuses. This certainly does not represent the views of the people or that of the leadership of the United States.

Lastly, in addition to her lack of diplomatic skills, Ms. Power has no management experience, causing me to question her ability to lead at the United Nations. The U.S. Mission to the U.N. is constantly facing management issues, and I had hoped that President Obama would have nominated someone who could effectively promote U.S. initiatives there. Unfortunately, Ms. Power is not such a nominee.

It is for these reasons that I oppose Samantha Power's nomination as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. •

Mr. RUBIO. I yield back the balance of the time available to the opposition.

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

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise to speak on behalf of Samantha Power's nomination to be the Ambassador to the United Nations.

As I said in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which I chaired, on Ms. Power, her appointment as Ambassador to the United Nations has come with much fanfare and with some criticism—which, at the end of the day, means she must be doing something right. In that regard, as I listen to my colleague member of the committee express his reservations and his opposition to Ms. Power, I think we have to have some context.

When she responded: The United States is the greatest country in the world and I will not apologize for it, it was her way of rejecting any characterization of statements that she made in the past. It was very clear to me. I want a U.N. ambassador sitting in front of the world who considers the United States the greatest country in the world and who will not apologize for the United States before that world body. She made it very clear that is exactly what she intends to do.

On accountability, we cannot achieve accountability at the United Nations if we do not have a U.N. Ambassador there to lead the effort on accountability. On those questions where she was asked by several members: Are you committed to making the United Nations a more accountable organization, not only did she say yes several times, in the affirmative, but she gave examples of how that accountability can be achieved. We need an Ambassador to pursue accountability at the United Nations.

Finally, I agree with my colleague that when America fails to lead in some critical times, we leave a void in the world. But we cannot lead if we do not have a U.N. Ambassador raising

their voice and their vote on our behalf on some of the critical issues of the day.

So this nomination is critical to pursuing the national interests and security of the United States. Whatever my colleagues might think about her nomination, I don't believe anyone can question her considerable credentials or her years of service. Certainly, no one can question her willingness to speak her mind, especially her willingness to speak out on human rights issues around the world.

As a war correspondent in Bosnia, in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Sudan, she has, as she said in her Pulitzer Prize-winning book, seen "evil at its worst."

Ms. Power has built a career and a reputation as one of the Nation's most principled voices against all human rights violations and crimes against humanity. I know that voice will be heard around the world should we confirm her.

While some of us may not agree with everything she has written and said during her extensive career as a journalist and foreign policy professional, she has been a tireless defender of human rights, and she has seen the tragedy of human suffering from the frontlines firsthand, and it has given her a unique perspective.

In her role at the National Security Council, she was clearly involved with U.S. policy toward the United Nations. She knows the United Nation's strengths, its weaknesses, and how it operates. At the end of the day the United States needs a representative at the United Nations who will uphold American values, promote human rights, secure our interests and the interests of our national security. I have every confidence in Samantha Power's ability to do exactly that, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting her nomination.

Personally, I am incredibly appreciative of the principled positions she has taken on the Armenian genocide, her belief that we should use the lessons of what clearly was an atrocity of historic proportions to prevent future crimes against humanity is a view consistent with my own and which is supported by her role in the President's Atrocities Prevention Board. I agree we must acknowledge the past, study how and why atrocities happen, if we are ever to give true meaning to the phrase "Never again."

As the son of immigrants from Cuba, I personally appreciate her commitment to exposing Cuba's total disregard for human and civil rights, and I respect her for not idealizing the harsh realities of communism in Cuba. I know from the conversation we had in my office, she appreciates the suffering of the Cuban people—the torture, abuse, detention, and abridgement of the civil and human rights of those who voice their dissent under the Castro regime. I welcome her commitment to reach out to Rosa

Maria Paya, daughter of the longtime dissident and Cuban activist, Oswaldo Paya who died under mysterious circumstances last year in Cuba as his car was bumped off the road, and I look forward to her fulfillment of that commitment.

At the end of day, it is fitting that someone with Ms. Power's background represent American interests and American values at the United Nations. In the words of the U.N. Preamble, it was created "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small."

Who better than Samantha Power, a recognized advocate for the fundamental rights of every human being, to be our ambassador to the United Nations? If confirmed, her focus will, of course, be on the crisis du jour: the Middle East, Syria, Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and others, and the nature of nations that emerge from the Arab spring. But I know while she is meeting those challenges, she will also be engaged on human rights around the world: on freedom of expression in Latin America; on fighting HIV-AIDS, malaria, and polio in Africa; on the status of talks to resolve the 66-year-old question of Cyprus; on women's rights in Pakistan and labor rights in Bangladesh and human rights in Sri Lanka.

Ms. Power, during her nomination process, has repeatedly expressed steadfast support for the State of Israel during her hearing, in her testimony, and individually to several members of the committee, including myself as chair. She has promised to stand up for Israel at the United Nations, and I know she will.

I ask unanimous consent that a letter to the committee in support of Ms. Power from six bipartisan former Ambassadors to the United Nations be printed in the RECORD, calling on the Senate to confirm her as soon as possible in this time of opportunity, to have a U.S. representative in New York advocating for American interests. I urge my colleagues to support this qualified, experienced nominee. I know she will serve the Nation well.

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

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee,
The Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As former U.S. ambassadors to the United Nations in New York, we are writing in support of Samantha Power's nomination as U.S. ambassador and representative to the United Nations. We believe she is eminently qualified for the role and if confirmed she will effectively promote U.S. values and interests.

She has long been a champion of human rights and an advocate for American leadership around the world. As a Pulitzer Prize winner, university teacher, senior member of the National Security staff at the White House, and journalist, she has the knowledge base effectively and efficiently to promote U.S. interests at the U.N.

She has a record of support for Israel and she will continue her advocacy as U.N. ambassador for our important ally in the Middle East while bringing to the task the balance and judgment required to advise the President and the Secretary of State on the perspective from the United Nations on the important issues of Arab-Israeli peace as well as the host of other issues which are constantly part of United State's policy in dealing with the world community through and with the United Nations.

The administration will benefit from her perspective; if confirmed, her experience will allow her to be an effective leader beginning on her first day.

We believe that the Senate should confirm Samantha Power as soon as possible because in this time of opportunity and challenge we need to have the position of US representative at the UN in New York filled and operating—advocating for US interests—at the earliest possible time.

We would be most grateful if you would ask your staff to insure that this letter is made available to all the members of the Committee of Foreign Relations.

With warm regards and respect,

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT.
JOHN DANFORTH.
DONALD MCHENRY.
EDWARD PERKINS.
THOMAS R. PICKERING.
BILL RICHARDSON.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

MR. KAINE. Mr. President, I also rise to support the nomination of Samantha Power to be our Ambassador at the United Nations. Within the last month I had a unique opportunity as the junior member of the committee that my friend Chairman MENENDEZ chairs, as the head of Foreign Relations, to spend the day at the United Nations and learn about it from then-Ambassador Rice. I left that day with a couple of reactions: first, very proud to be an American, and, second, concerned about the challenges the institution faces.

First, on the proud to be American, I think it is important for us to realize, for whatever its flaws, the United Nations would not exist if it were not for this country. It is a quintessential American idea to pull together an institution that tries to build peace, that tries to solve hunger, that tries to solve global health needs. The idea first gained force through the efforts of American President and Virginian Woodrow Wilson who won the Nobel prize for trying to get the League of Nations going at the end of World War 1. That league lasted for 20 years and collapsed, for many reasons, including the lack of participation in the United States in the global effort. But the idea did not die. The American idea stayed alive, and in 1939 the State Department, within 2 years after the collapse of the league, started to work on the next version. FDR worked on it during his entire Presidency and was scheduled to have the first conference on the United Nations 2 weeks after his untimely death in 1945.

The second decision made by President Truman in 1945—the first was to keep FDR's Cabinet—was he was posed with this: After FDR's death, we can

postpone the meeting in San Francisco about the formation of the United Nations. But Truman said: No, we are going to go ahead because this is something the world needs and America is uniquely positioned to lead.

Ever since its start, in funding and support, through good times and bad, through controversies Senator RUBIO described on the floor, this United Nations has worked hard to do good, worked hard to achieve an ideal that may be impossible to achieve. It is a tribute to the U.S. role as a global leader that the United Nations exists today.

I was also struck again by many of the challenges—the challenges of a tough globe, the challenges of U.N. problems in the ethics and finance area, the challenges that confuse many Americans as we look at the U.N., principally those referred to by my colleague Senator MENENDEZ, a history of anti-Semitism at the U.N. that confuses us as we watch it.

What are we to do with this institution that we birthed, more than any other nation, that still offers great hope and service every day, yet still needs significant change? I think what we should do is put a strong person in to be U.S. Ambassador, and Samantha Power is that individual. She has the strength to tackle the challenges that need tackling at the U.N. She has had the career, as described by earlier speakers, as a war correspondent, a writer, somebody who snuck across borders to take photos of atrocities in Darfur and then bring them to the attention of the world. Her writings and her activism have inspired generations of activists around the world to take up the cause of human rights.

She has been the President's senior adviser on matters in the United Nations in the last 4 years. To focus on this issue, here is what Samantha Power has done in that role to help deal with this issue of anti-Semitism at the U.N. and the double standard in the treatment of Israel. She worked to ensure the closest possible cooperation between the United States and Israel at the U.N., where she championed efforts to stand up against attempts to delegitimize Israel. She was key to the decision of the United States to boycott the deeply flawed "Durban II" conference in 2009, which turned into an event to criticize Israel. She helped mobilize efforts for the U.N. sanctions against Iran. She has challenged unfair treatment of Israel by U.N. bodies, including the one-sided Goldstone Report, and efforts to single out Israel in the Security Council after the Turkish flotilla incident, and she opposed the unilateral moves in the U.N. by the Palestinians that could undermine prospects for a negotiated peace agreement between Palestine and Israel, and how hopeful we are at the events this week, and we pray it goes forward and finds positive possibility. This is the activity she has had helping the U.N. while she was not the U.N. Amba-

sador. I want her in that seat so she can carry forward on those initiatives and others.

She will champion efforts to protect persecuted Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East and beyond, and she helped spearhead the creation of new tools for genocide prevention and she led the administration's efforts to combat human trafficking, all values of which we can be proud if they would be on display at the United Nations.

I said during her hearing the one thing that made me scratch my head a bit about her when I heard she was nominated is I think of her primarily as a very blunt and outspoken person, and blunt and outspoken is not always the best job description of a diplomat. But in the case of the United Nations, with the challenges there, the challenges in the needed financial reform, the challenges in the need to push back against some instances of anti-Semitism, the challenges of ethics and other issues, we need blunt and outspoken at the United Nation. We don't need vague and ambiguous. We need the kind of strong leadership that Samantha Power would provide.

I think of many United Nations Ambassadors. It has been an "A" list of people from Henry Cabot Lodge to President George H.W. Bush before he was President to Bill Richardson and Andrew Young. We can think of many. But the two I think of most—I guess I think of them because they are Irish Americans—when I think of Samantha Power is Daniel Moynihan and Jeane Kirkpatrick, strong United Nations Ambassadors who stood proudly for the values of this country, who gave no quarter, who were good diplomats but did not hesitate to call the truth whenever and wherever they saw it. I think Samantha Power will do the same, and that I is why I support her nomination. I yield the floor.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of my distinguished colleague from Virginia. He is a very thoughtful member of the committee. I appreciate his remarks on behalf of Ms. Power.

With that, I yield all remaining time. I ask for the yeas and nays.

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

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Shall the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Samantha Power, of Massachusetts, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations?

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 10, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 200 Ex.]

YEAS—87

Alexander	Fischer	Mikulski
Ayotte	Flake	Moran
Baldwin	Franken	Murkowski
Baucus	Gillibrand	Murphy
Begich	Graham	Murray
Bennet	Grassley	Nelson
Blumenthal	Hagan	Portman
Blunt	Harkin	Pryor
Boozman	Hatch	Reed
Boxer	Heinrich	Reid
Brown	Heitkamp	Risch
Burr	Hirono	Roberts
Cantwell	Hoeben	Rockefeller
Cardin	Isakson	Sanders
Carper	Johanns	Schatz
Casey	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Chambliss	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Chiesa	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Stabenow
Coburn	Kirk	Tester
Cochran	Klobuchar	Thune
Collins	Leahy	Toomey
Coons	Levin	Udall (CO)
Corker	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Cornyn	Markey	Warner
Crapo	McCaskill	Warren
Donnelly	McConnell	Whitehouse
Durbin	Menendez	Wicker
Feinstein	Merkley	Wyden

NAYS—10

Barrasso	Lee	Shelby
Cruz	Paul	Vitter
Enzi	Rubio	
Heller	Scott	

NOT VOTING—3

Inhofe	Landrieu	McCain
--------	----------	--------

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

PROMOTING ENERGY SAVINGS IN RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AND INDUSTRY—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 154, S. 1392.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 154 (S. 1392), a bill to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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