

CRISIS ON THE BORDER

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, the second issue I would like to talk about is my colleagues in the House are trying to find their way to pass legislation regarding the crisis on the border. They tried yesterday. They failed. They are back at it again.

I thank Speaker BOEHNER, from the Republican point of view, for not leaving town until we have a solution in a Republican-controlled House. It has been hard to find. It is an emotional issue. It is a difficult issue on many levels. The human suffering of the children—everybody is moved by that, as we should be. But we cannot incentivize these three countries in question to keep sending their children here, putting their children at risk, and overrunning our systems. That is not the way to deal with our neighbor.

So the House hopefully will pass legislation reforming the 2008 law that needs to be reformed to make children from Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, that region subject to the same laws as if you came from Mexico, and they are putting money aside to deal with the deportation problem and the humanitarian crisis.

If they can pass a solution to this problem, I am urging the majority leader of the Senate to bring us back in because we should not be gone for 5 weeks with something this important left unresolved. You may not agree with the House, but let's take up their proposal, amend it, vote on it, vote it up or vote it down, take the prior Democratic proposal, allow amendments to be had on both sides of the aisle, and see if we can find common ground on dealing with the border.

The President at one time embraced changes in the 2008 law. That has to be done or we will never solve the problem.

I do not mind spending money in a humanitarian fashion as long as we are spending money to solve the problem, not perpetuate it. So if the House can find its way in offering a solution to the border crisis, I am urging my Democratic colleagues who control this body to act. Let's not be gone for 5 weeks. Bring us all back. See if we can find a solution among ourselves in the Senate, talk to our colleagues in the House and solve the problem.

It is within our power to do so. I know we can get there. I know there are at least five or six Democrats who understand throwing money at the problem without changing the 2008 law gets you nowhere. There are plenty of people on our side who understand a humanitarian crisis does exist. Let's marry these forces and see if we can come up with a bipartisan compromise in the Senate.

The only way you can do that is to be allowed to offer amendments and debate. I cannot think of a problem more dramatic facing the Nation right now in terms of a crisis than what is happening on our border: 50,000 unaccompanied children, the spike in people

coming from Central America after President Obama unilaterally gave amnesty to children already here. No matter how well intentioned, it has created the belief in that part of the world that if you make it to America you can stay.

We want you to understand there is a legal way to get to America. Just do not show up on the doorstep and ask to be taken in. That is not a way for our Nation to have to deal with people wanting to come to this Nation. So I hope we will not be gone for 5 weeks with this problem unaddressed.

If the House can get its act together and pass a solution to the problem, it would be incumbent, in my view, upon the Senate to reconvene, deal with the House proposal, come up with one of our own, and engage the House to solve this problem. Five weeks is a very long time to be away from a problem this important.

As to the August break, contrary to what a lot of people may believe, we do not all go on vacation. We try to take some time for ourselves and our families. But it is a chance to go visit other parts of the world, to get informed on problems that can come here in terms of affecting our national security. Situations over there are going to come here if we do not deal with them responsibly. It is a chance to do things in your State. So people are very busy during August. They try to capture some time for themselves. But at the end of the day, 5 weeks is way too long to be absent from Washington as the crisis on the border gets worse. If the House can find a solution to this problem, I am urging the Democratic-controlled Senate to bring us back, take up their solution, vote it up, vote it down, bring back the Senate bill, allow it to be amended so we can find consensus. Consensus is there if we want to find it.

I appreciate the Presiding Officer's voice on national security. The Presiding Officer has been a stalwart friend of Israel in trying to find a way forward regarding the problems the Ukrainian people face. I hope we can find a solution to our border crisis. But a final thought as to Israel: Today could be a very good day for the U.S.-Israel relationship. It started in the Senate. I hope my House colleagues will pass the Iron Dome legislation that we passed by unanimous consent today. The House needs to get this done so the President can sign this into law.

To my colleagues in the House: Please take up Iron Dome. Let's get this right.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 2673

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, we all know that our ally Israel is in a fight for survival because a terrorist group, so named by the United States and Europe, is at war with Israel right now. We remember how it all started, with the kidnapping of three Israeli boys and the torture and the deaths, and Hamas praised that. Tragically, there was a revenge killing, and the Israeli Government arrested the Israelis responsible for that and they are going to face justice, while Hamas praises—praises—what happened.

Today I spoke to the Ambassador, and this is what I heard him say—and I haven't fact-checked this, but as I understand it there was a cease-fire in place, all sides agreed everything was clear. Israel was going to be allowed to clear out the tunnels which are being used to open to Hamas the country of Israel, where they go under the ground and they have one objective—to kill Israelis, to torture them, to kidnap them. No country—no country—could ever live with that, no country—not our country.

Imagine if we had 100 rockets a day coming from Mexico or Canada or from the sea, either side. We would never ever sit back for that. We would never sit back if under our great cities we had terrorists building tunnels so they could sneak in suicide bombers to kill our people.

Here we had a cease-fire, and I know the Secretary of State worked hard. Yet and still what happened, even though it was known that Israel was permitted to continue clearing out these tunnels, a suicide bomber blew himself up, killed Israeli soldiers and someone else grabbed and kidnapped—we think—we think—an Israeli soldier. We don't know all the facts on it. This must be condemned.

We have a bill, Senator BLUNT and I, and it has 81 cosponsors on it. It is the Israeli American strategic partnership act, and it will send a strong signal today that we stand with Israel. We want peace. We want justice. We want a good life for the Israelis and the Palestinian people. But you cannot do it when you have a terrorist organization running, in essence, the Gaza Strip.

In this bill Senator BLUNT and I have worked on, there is a visa waiver section, and I want to go over that because I fear we may have objections to this. I am hoping not, I still hope we won't, but in this visa waiver section it does three things: First, it expresses the sense of the Senate that Israel should be designated as a program country under the Visa Waiver Program.

Second, it urges United States engagement with Israel to help it meet the requirements of the waiver program; i.e., when Israelis come over

they pay attention to the time on their visas and they go back to their country when the time is up.

Third, it authorizes but doesn't require the administration to waive a nonimmigrant visa waiver requirement only if Israel meets all the other program requirements.

Here is what is important. There are 38 countries in the Visa Waiver Program. These countries represent some of America's closest allies. In fact, 20 of the current Visa Waiver Program countries are NATO allies. So I want to say clearly to my friend Senator SESSIONS and anyone within the sound of my voice that the provision I hope he will not object to today, the provision gives Israel, the strongest ally of the United States in the Middle East, a chance to join the program. As a member of the Visa Waiver Program, Israeli citizens, many of whom have families in America, would be allowed to visit the United States for up to 90 days without first obtaining a visa. This deepens the ties between our nations.

I want to read some of the countries that have these privileges: Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia, Estonia, the Czech Republic. I was proud to support them, but I am also proud to say that Israel deserves to be on that list. Why shouldn't they have the same opportunity?

When we first wrote our visa waiver provision, there were objections that we didn't have enough flexibility. We changed it and now we have 81 sponsors on this legislation. I would ask, how many pieces of legislation have 81 co-sponsors? You couldn't even get it for a Mother's Day resolution. I mean this is strong. And of all the times for us to object to this United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act, it should not be today.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 492, S. 2673; that the bill be read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Reserving my right to object, I appreciate Senator BOXER's leadership on this issue. She is a great advocate and a strong supporter of Israel, as I am, and have been consistently since I have been in the Senate.

I would note for the Senator that the expansion of this program has been problematic for some time. I have been involved with the Visa Waiver Program for quite a number of years. So my concern is not based on Israel, it is based on trying to maintain consistency and effectiveness of the program.

It is not a program that I think is operating effectively. Congress has declared that no more waivers be granted until after this biometric exit system has been completed. I believe our House colleagues are considering a bill

that is very similar to what Senator BOXER and others are supporting but it does not include this provision.

Based on that, I am not able to support this amendment and would object.

Mr. President, if the Senator would allow me, I would say let's pass a bill without that provision in it. Let's get that done today, and I will commit to further research and digging into this to see if there is any legitimate way based on law and consistency and the integrity of the visa waiver system that I could support it. It might be. Israel is an educated country. We have a lot of people who travel back and forth between our countries. It is just so far the State Department has not approved it. The House does not have it in their bill, and I and the Members of the Judiciary Committee who have dealt with these issues for quite a number of years—I have resisted the expansion of this program contrary to the law and State Department policy. Regrettably I have objected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I won't be long, but I am so disappointed. I know my friend wants to be helpful, but I have to say that the visa waiver section—I am not being stubborn about this—all it does is it says that Israel should have the same privileges as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the Czech Republic.

Of all the days to say no to this bill, with what is going on over there. It hurts my heart. It breaks my heart, because this bill authorizes \$200 million in the value of U.S. weapons sales in Israel to a total of \$1.8 billion. It is a stockpile that is intended to be used by U.S. forces, but in event of emergency, Israel can tap that. And, my God, this is an emergency. It is so critical. In fact, just last week the United States provided Israel with ammunition from the stockpile after Israel requested help to replace its depleted supplies.

We shouldn't be waiting another hour to pass this, and here we are as the clock ticks down and we go off on our break and as my friend knows, this bill doesn't cost one slim dime—not one slim dime—not one penny. It is such a signal to Israel that we stand with her.

It also has an energy section where we help Israel develop her natural gas supplies to become energy independent. It is so sad for me today.

Last night Senator CORKER had an objection. He cleared it. He and I had a real go-to on it. I know we had a bit of a misunderstanding. He backed off. I am so appreciative. Then Senator COBURN had a problem, and he backed off and he said, "No, I kind of like this section." Then Senator LEE had a problem and Senator COBURN talked to Senator LEE and Senator LEE was fine.

We have 81 people on this bill, and 1 Senator this afternoon is holding it hostage because he doesn't like the program. Well, we can all work together on the program, but why single

out Israel because you don't like the program? Let this go.

We can have a colloquy. We can work together, Senator SESSIONS. We can make sure there is no abuse here. We changed this so we would be sure there is no abuse.

I am very saddened at this, and all I can say is that Senator BLUNT and I are coming back with this bill over and over and over again, and one way or the other we will get it done.

I say to my friends in Israel: Take heart. Eighty-one of our Senators are with you on this bill, and only a handful haven't even gone on, and only one—only one—objected. So take heart, because we are with you and we will get this done.

Mr. President, that is the end of my remarks, and 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.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. REID). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, if it would be more convenient for you to come to the desk, I am happy to sit in the Chair.

Since the Presiding Officer can't answer my question, I will 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. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BOXER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES RELATING TO CONTRIBUTIONS AND EXPENDITURES INTENDED TO AFFECT ELECTIONS—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Madam President, is the motion to proceed to S.J. Res. 19 now pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to proceed is pending.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I have a cloture motion that I ask be reported.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 471, S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to